STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 54th Legislature (2013)

HOUSE BILL 1785 By: Blackwell

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to child abuse; amending 10A O.S. 2011, Section 1-2-101, which relates to reporting child abuse; deleting mandatory reporting requirement for any person; deleting certain exception to mandatory reporting requirement; deleting mandatory reporting requirement for certain health care professionals; providing for optional reporting; removing punishment for failure to report abuse or neglect; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 10A O.S. 2011, Section 1-2-101, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1-2-101. A. 1. The Department of Human Services shall establish a statewide centralized hotline for the reporting of child abuse or neglect to the Department.

2. The Department shall provide hotline-specific training including, but not limited to, interviewing skills, customer service skills, narrative writing, necessary computer systems, making case determinations, and identifying priority situations.

3. The Department is authorized to contract with third parties in order to train hotline workers.

4. The Department shall develop a system to track the number of calls received, and of that number:

a. the number of calls screened out,

b. the number of referrals assigned, and

c. the number of calls in which the allegations were later found to be unsubstantiated or ruled out.

B. 1. ~~Every~~ Any person having reason to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years is a victim of abuse or neglect ~~shall~~ may report the matter promptly to the ~~Department of Human Services. Reports shall be made to the~~ hotline provided for in subsection A of this section. Any allegation of abuse or neglect reported in any manner to a county office shall immediately be referred to the hotline by the Department. ~~Provided, however, that in actions for custody by abandonment, provided for in Section 7 of this act, there shall be no reporting requirement.~~

2. ~~Every~~ Any physician, surgeon, or other health care professional including doctors of medicine, licensed osteopathic physicians, residents and interns, or any other health care professional attending the birth of a child who tests positive for alcohol or a controlled dangerous substance ~~shall promptly~~ may report the matter to the Department.

3. ~~No privilege or contract shall relieve any person from the requirement of reporting pursuant to this section.~~

~~4.~~ The optional reporting ~~obligations~~ under this section ~~are~~ is individual, and no employer, supervisor, or administrator shall interfere with the optional reporting ~~obligations~~ of any employee or other person or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against the employee or other person who in good faith reports suspected child abuse or neglect, or who provides testimony in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. Any employer, supervisor, or administrator who discharges, discriminates or retaliates against the employee or other person shall be liable for damages, costs and attorney fees.

~~5. Every~~ 4. Any physician, surgeon, or other health care professional making a report of abuse or neglect as ~~required~~ provided by this subsection or examining a child to determine the likelihood of abuse or neglect and ~~every~~ any hospital or related institution in which the child was examined or treated shall provide, upon request, copies of the results of the examination or copies of the examination on which the report was based and any other clinical notes, x-rays, photographs, and other previous or current records relevant to the case to law enforcement officers conducting a criminal investigation into the case and to employees of the Department of Human Services conducting an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect in the case.

C. ~~Any person who knowingly and willfully fails to promptly report suspected child abuse or neglect or who interferes with the~~

~~prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to local law enforcement for criminal investigation and, upon conviction thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.~~

~~D.~~ 1. Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report pursuant to the provisions of this section or a report that the person knows lacks factual foundation may be reported to local law enforcement for criminal investigation and, upon conviction thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

2. If a court determines that an accusation of child abuse or neglect made during a child custody proceeding is false and the person making the accusation knew it to be false at the time the accusation was made, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) and reasonable attorney fees incurred in recovering the sanctions, against the person making the accusation. The remedy provided by this paragraph is in addition to paragraph 1 of this subsection or to any other remedy provided by law.

~~E. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to exempt or prohibit any person from reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to subsection B of this section.~~

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2013.

54-1-5812 EK 01/02/13