

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DHFS 7/18/2003

LRB Number 03-2825/1	Introduction Number SB-207	Estimate Type Original
Subject Child abuse and neglect regarding members of religious organizations		

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Under current law, persons of certain professions, such as school teachers and physicians, who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by them in the course of their professional duties has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur, are required to report the abuse, or threatened abuse, to the appropriate county department, or, in Milwaukee County, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW).

In addition to current law requirements, this bill requires members of the clergy to report sexual abuse or threatened sexual abuse of a child. However, a member of a clergy is not required to report information that he or she receives through confidential communications made to him or her privately or in a confessional setting.

This bill may increase reports of sexual abuse of a child to county human service departments, or in Milwaukee County, BMCW. The additional reports could increase assessments and investigations of child abuse by county child protective service workers, thus increasing costs for county human service departments, or, in Milwaukee County, BMCW. However, because the number of reports of sexual abuse that would be made by members of the clergy is unknown, the exact fiscal effect of this bill cannot be determined.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications