



2025 ASSEMBLY BILL 412

August 29, 2025 - Introduced by Representatives GREEN, B. JACOBSON, PIWOWARCZYK, BRILL, DITTRICH, DUCHOW, GOEBEN, GUNDRUM, HURD, KITCHENS, KNODL, KREIBICH, MAXEY, MELOTIK, MURPHY, NOVAK, PENTERMAN, PETERSEN, SNYDER, SUMMERFIELD and TITTL, cosponsored by Senators QUINN, JAMES and MARKLEIN. Referred to Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

- 1 **AN ACT** *to amend* 48.981 (2) (a) 10. and 48.981 (3) (a) 3.; *to create* 48.981 (2) (a)
- 2 31. of the statutes; **relating to:** mandatory reporting requirements and
- 3 referring cases of threatened or suspected child abuse to law enforcement.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, certain individuals are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the county child welfare department or to the police if the individual has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by the individual in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect (mandatory reporter). Generally, if a report is for threatened or suspected child sexual abuse or trafficking, the child welfare department must within 12 hours refer the case to the police. A child welfare department is required to adopt a written policy regarding how it refers to police reports of other forms of threatened or suspected child abuse or neglect, but it is not required by law to refer such cases to police.

This bill requires a child welfare department generally to refer to police all reports of threatened or suspected abuse. "Abuse" is defined in current law to include non-accidental physical injuries inflicted on a child, sexual abuse, trafficking, manufacturing methamphetamine in the presence of a child, and emotional damage for which a child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian has neglected, refused, or been unable for reasons other than poverty to obtain the necessary treatment or take steps to ameliorate the symptoms.

ASSEMBLY BILL 412**SECTION 1**

Additionally, the bill adds to the list of mandatory reporters an employee of a child welfare department whose duties include direct interaction with children or the handling of child welfare cases and specifies that “social worker,” which is currently on the list of mandatory reporters, means an individual who holds a social worker certificate granted by the Marriage and Family Therapy Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board.

For further information see the local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 48.981 (2) (a) 10. of the statutes is amended to read:

48.981 (2) (a) 10. A social worker, as defined in s. 457.01 (10).

SECTION 2. 48.981 (2) (a) 31. of the statutes is created to read:

48.981 (2) (a) 31. An employee of an agency whose duties include direct interaction with children or the handling of child welfare cases.

SECTION 3. 48.981 (3) (a) 3. of the statutes is amended to read:

48.981 (3) (a) 3. Except as provided in sub. (3m), a county department, the department, or a licensed child welfare agency under contract with the department shall within 12 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays, refer to the sheriff or police department all cases of suspected or threatened abuse, as defined in s. 48.02 (1) ~~(b) to (f)~~, reported to it. For cases of suspected or threatened ~~abuse, as defined in s. 48.02 (1) (a), (am), (g), or (gm),~~ or neglect, each county department, the department, and a licensed child welfare agency under contract with the department shall adopt a written policy specifying the kinds of reports it will routinely report to local law enforcement authorities.

(END)