

By Senator Torres

15-01243-17

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to child psychological abuse; amending  
3       s. 39.01, F.S.; revising the definition of the term  
4       "harm"; amending s. 39.201, F.S.; revising a provision  
5       relating to mandatory reporting requirements for child  
6       abuse, abandonment, or neglect to include child  
7       psychological abuse; requiring the Board of Psychology  
8       within the Department of Health to revise the  
9       continuing education requirements for renewal of a  
10      license to practice psychology to include child  
11      psychological abuse; providing an effective date.

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13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15       Section 1. Paragraph (m) is added to subsection (30) of  
16      section 39.01, Florida Statutes, to read:

17       39.01 Definitions.—When used in this chapter, unless the  
18      context otherwise requires:

19       (30) "Harm" to a child's health or welfare can occur when  
20      any person:

21       (m) Inflicts mental injury, as defined in subsection (42),  
22      on a child through the use of manipulation or psychological  
23      abuse, including, but not limited to, parental alienation, which  
24      creates a significant developmental pathology, personality  
25      disorder pathology, or delusional-psychiatric pathology as  
26      diagnosed by a mental health professional licensed under chapter  
27      490 or chapter 491.

28       Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section  
29      39.201, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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30 39.201 Mandatory reports of child abuse, abandonment, or  
31 neglect; mandatory reports of death; central abuse hotline.—

32 (1) (a) Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to  
33 suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a  
34 parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible  
35 for the child's welfare, as defined in this chapter, or that a  
36 child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent,  
37 legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known  
38 and available to provide supervision and care shall report such  
39 knowledge or suspicion to the department in the manner  
40 prescribed in subsection (2). For purposes of the mandatory  
41 reporting requirements in this section, child abuse includes any  
42 harm or mental injury as those terms are defined in s. 39.01.

43 Section 3. The Board of Psychology within the Department of  
44 Health shall revise the requirements for renewal of a license to  
45 practice psychology, pursuant to s. 490.007, Florida Statutes,  
46 to require continuing education regarding child psychological  
47 abuse, including, but not limited to, abuse through the use of  
48 manipulation or parental alienation.

49 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.