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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
02/20/2019	.	
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The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs  
(Montford) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. Subsections (2) and (5) of section 39.202,  
Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

39.202 Confidentiality of reports and records in cases of  
child abuse or neglect.—

(2) Except as provided in subsection (4), access to such  
records, excluding the name of the reporter and the names of



11 instructional personnel as defined in s. 1012.01(2), school  
12 administrators as defined in s. 1012.01(3)(c), and educational  
13 support employees as described in s. 1012.01(6)(a) who have  
14 provided information during a protective investigation which  
15 shall be released only as provided in subsection (5), shall be  
16 granted only to the following persons, officials, and agencies:

17 (a) Employees, authorized agents, or contract providers of  
18 the department, the Department of Health, the Agency for Persons  
19 with Disabilities, the Office of Early Learning, or county  
20 agencies responsible for carrying out:

- 21 1. Child or adult protective investigations;
- 22 2. Ongoing child or adult protective services;
- 23 3. Early intervention and prevention services;
- 24 4. Healthy Start services;
- 25 5. Licensure or approval of adoptive homes, foster homes,  
26 child care facilities, facilities licensed under chapter 393,  
27 family day care homes, providers who receive school readiness  
28 funding under part VI of chapter 1002, or other homes used to  
29 provide for the care and welfare of children;
- 30 6. Employment screening for caregivers in residential group  
31 homes; or
- 32 7. Services for victims of domestic violence when provided  
33 by certified domestic violence centers working at the  
34 department's request as case consultants or with shared clients.

35  
36 Also, employees or agents of the Department of Juvenile Justice  
37 responsible for the provision of services to children, pursuant  
38 to chapters 984 and 985.

39 (b) Criminal justice agencies of appropriate jurisdiction.



193838

40 (c) The state attorney of the judicial circuit in which the  
41 child resides or in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.

42 (d) The parent or legal custodian of any child who is  
43 alleged to have been abused, abandoned, or neglected, and the  
44 child, and their attorneys, including any attorney representing  
45 a child in civil or criminal proceedings. This access must ~~shall~~  
46 be made available no later than 60 days after the department  
47 receives the initial report of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.  
48 However, any information otherwise made confidential or exempt  
49 by law may ~~shall~~ not be released pursuant to this paragraph.

50 (e) Any person alleged in the report as having caused the  
51 abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child. This access must  
52 ~~shall~~ be made available no later than 60 days after the  
53 department receives the initial report of abuse, abandonment, or  
54 neglect and, when the alleged perpetrator is not a parent, must  
55 ~~shall~~ be limited to information involving the protective  
56 investigation only and may ~~shall~~ not include any information  
57 relating to subsequent dependency proceedings. However, any  
58 information otherwise made confidential or exempt by law may  
59 ~~shall~~ not be released pursuant to this paragraph.

60 (f) A court upon its finding that access to such records  
61 may be necessary for the determination of an issue before the  
62 court; however, such access must ~~shall~~ be limited to inspection  
63 in camera, unless the court determines that public disclosure of  
64 the information contained therein is necessary for the  
65 resolution of an issue then pending before it.

66 (g) A grand jury, by subpoena, upon its determination that  
67 access to such records is necessary in the conduct of its  
68 official business.



193838

69 (h) Any appropriate official of the department or the  
70 Agency for Persons with Disabilities who is responsible for:

71 1. Administration or supervision of the department's  
72 program for the prevention, investigation, or treatment of child  
73 abuse, abandonment, or neglect, or abuse, neglect, or  
74 exploitation of a vulnerable adult, when carrying out his or her  
75 official function;

76 2. Taking appropriate administrative action concerning an  
77 employee of the department or the agency who is alleged to have  
78 perpetrated child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, or abuse,  
79 neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult; or

80 3. Employing and continuing employment of personnel of the  
81 department or the agency.

82 (i) Any person authorized by the department who is engaged  
83 in the use of such records or information for bona fide  
84 research, statistical, or audit purposes. Such individual or  
85 entity shall enter into a privacy and security agreement with  
86 the department and shall comply with all laws and rules  
87 governing the use of such records and information for research  
88 and statistical purposes. Information identifying the subjects  
89 of such records or information shall be treated as confidential  
90 by the researcher and may ~~shall~~ not be released in any form.

91 (j) The Division of Administrative Hearings for purposes of  
92 any administrative challenge.

93 (k) Any appropriate official of an ~~a Florida~~ advocacy  
94 council in this state investigating a report of known or  
95 suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect; the Auditor  
96 General or the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government  
97 Accountability for the purpose of conducting audits or



193838

98 examinations pursuant to law; or the guardian ad litem for the  
99 child.

100 (l) Employees or agents of an agency of another state that  
101 has comparable jurisdiction to the jurisdiction described in  
102 paragraph (a).

103 (m) The Public Employees Relations Commission for the sole  
104 purpose of obtaining evidence for appeals filed pursuant to s.  
105 447.207. Records may be released only after deletion of all  
106 information which specifically identifies persons other than the  
107 employee.

108 (n) Employees or agents of the Department of Revenue  
109 responsible for child support enforcement activities.

110 (o) Any person in the event of the death of a child  
111 determined to be a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.  
112 Information identifying the person reporting abuse, abandonment,  
113 or neglect may ~~shall~~ not be released. Any information otherwise  
114 made confidential or exempt by law may ~~shall~~ not be released  
115 pursuant to this paragraph.

116 (p) An employee of the local school district who is  
117 designated as a liaison between the school district and the  
118 department pursuant to an interagency agreement required under  
119 s. 39.0016 and the principal of a public school, private school,  
120 or charter school where the child is a student. Information  
121 contained in the records which the liaison or the principal  
122 determines are necessary for a school employee to effectively  
123 provide a student with educational services may be released to  
124 that employee.

125 (q) An employee or agent of the Department of Education who  
126 is responsible for the investigation or prosecution of



193838

127 misconduct by a certified educator.

128 (r) Staff of a children's advocacy center that is  
129 established and operated under s. 39.3035.

130 (s) A physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459,  
131 a psychologist licensed under chapter 490, or a mental health  
132 professional licensed under chapter 491 engaged in the care or  
133 treatment of the child.

134 (t) Persons with whom the department is seeking to place  
135 the child or to whom placement has been granted, including  
136 foster parents for whom an approved home study has been  
137 conducted, the designee of a licensed residential group home  
138 described in s. 39.523, an approved relative or nonrelative with  
139 whom a child is placed pursuant to s. 39.402, preadoptive  
140 parents for whom a favorable preliminary adoptive home study has  
141 been conducted, adoptive parents, or an adoption entity acting  
142 on behalf of preadoptive or adoptive parents.

143 (5) (a) The name of any person reporting child abuse,  
144 abandonment, or neglect may not be released to any person other  
145 than employees of the department responsible for child  
146 protective services, the central abuse hotline, law enforcement,  
147 the child protection team, or the appropriate state attorney,  
148 without the written consent of the person reporting. This does  
149 not prohibit the subpoenaing of a person reporting child abuse,  
150 abandonment, or neglect when deemed necessary by the court, the  
151 state attorney, or the department, provided the fact that such  
152 person made the report is not disclosed. Any person who reports  
153 a case of child abuse or neglect may, at the time he or she  
154 makes the report, request that the department notify him or her  
155 that a child protective investigation occurred as a result of



193838

156 the report. Any person specifically listed in s. 39.201(1) who  
157 makes a report in his or her official capacity may also request  
158 a written summary of the outcome of the investigation. The  
159 department must ~~shall~~ mail such a notice to the reporter within  
160 10 days after completing the child protective investigation.

161 (b) The names of instructional personnel as defined in s.  
162 1012.01(2), school administrators as defined in s.  
163 1012.01(3)(c), and educational support employees as described in  
164 s. 1012.01(6)(a) who provide information during a protective  
165 investigation may not be released to any person other than  
166 employees of the department responsible for child protective  
167 services, the central abuse hotline, law enforcement, the child  
168 protection team, or the appropriate state attorney without the  
169 written consent of such personnel. This does not prohibit the  
170 subpoenaing of a person contributing information to an  
171 investigation of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect when  
172 deemed necessary by the court, the state attorney, or the  
173 department. This paragraph is subject to the Open Government  
174 Sunset Review Act in accordance with s. 119.15 and shall stand  
175 repealed on October 2, 2024, unless reviewed and saved from  
176 repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

177 Section 2. The Legislature finds that it is a public  
178 necessity that information that is exempt or confidential and  
179 exempt from s. 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and s. 24(a),  
180 Article I of the State Constitution remain exempt or  
181 confidential for instructional personnel as defined in s.  
182 1012.01(2), school administrators as defined in s.  
183 1012.01(3)(c), and educational support employees as described in  
184 s. 1012.01(6)(a) who have provided information during a



193838

185 protective investigation. Otherwise, sensitive personal  
186 information concerning school employees would be disclosed, and  
187 such employees may experience harassment or harm from family,  
188 fictive kin, or friends of the alleged victim of child abuse.  
189 Such harassment may inhibit such employees from providing  
190 important information to a child abuse investigation. The harm  
191 that would result from the release of such information  
192 substantially outweighs any public benefit that would be  
193 achieved by disclosure.

194 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.

195  
196 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

197 And the title is amended as follows:

198 Delete everything before the enacting clause  
199 and insert:

200 A bill to be entitled

201 An act relating to child abuse, abandonment, and  
202 neglect; amending s. 39.202, F.S.; prohibiting the  
203 Department of Children and Families from releasing the  
204 names of school personnel who have provided  
205 information during a protective investigation except  
206 under certain circumstances; providing for future  
207 legislative review and repeal of the exemption;  
208 conforming provisions to changes made by the act;  
209 providing a statement of public necessity; ; providing  
210 an effective date.