



## HD 3093, An Act to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Filed by: Representative Nick Collins

### Why Is It Important to Prevent Abuse and Neglect?

- Research has found that successful child abuse interventions must both reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the well-being of children and families.
- The impact of child maltreatment can be profound. Research shows that child maltreatment is associated with adverse health and mental health outcomes in children and families, and those negative effects can last a lifetime.
- In addition to the impact on the child, child abuse and neglect affect various systems, including physical and mental health, law enforcement, judicial and public social services, and nonprofit agencies as they respond to the incident and support the victims.
- Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. They are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.<sup>i</sup>

### What Does This Legislation Do to Prevent Abuse & Neglect?

- This legislation directs the Department of Children and Families to create or utilize an existing online mandated reporter training that must be completed annually by all mandated reporters. While many mandated reporters are trained initially, they often do not receive any additional training, and it certainly is not required. Requiring a free, online mandated reporter training will help those who are required to report suspected abuse and neglect be better able to recognize and report when required to do so.
- This legislation also creates a child abuse and neglect expert review panel under the Office of the Child Advocate. This panel would review the repeated entry of children into the care of the Department of Children and Families in a 12-month period for the same family unit and determine what, if any, actions are needed to protect the child from further harm. The panel would also report on any trends that are affecting these families, any agency service gaps that are observed, and any recommendations for policy changes to prevent the repeated abuse and neglect of children.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/overview/whatiscaap/>