

1 H.880

2 Introduced by Representatives Cole of Hartford, Greer of Bennington, Boutin

3 of Barre City, Carris Duncan of Whitingham, Emmons of

4 Springfield, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Burlington,

5 Kleppner of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, McGill of

6 Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel

7 Referred to Committee on

8 Date:

9 Subject: Human services; child welfare services; reporting abuse of children;

10 mandated reporters

11 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to repeal the

12 four-pronged exception that permits clergy not to report child abuse and

13 neglect when it is received in confidence while acting as a spiritual advisor.

14 Additionally, the bill proposes to repeal a related provision mandating the

15 reporting of information that falls outside of the exception even though the

16 information may have been learned in a manner that falls within the exception.

17 An act relating to repealing the exception for clergy to report child abuse

18 and neglect

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 4913 is amended to read:

3 § 4913. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT; REMEDIAL

4 ACTION

5 * * *

6 (i) ~~Except as provided in subsection (j) of this section, a~~ A person may not
7 refuse to make a report required by this section on the grounds that making the
8 report would violate a privilege or disclose a confidential communication.

9 (j) ~~A member of the clergy shall not be required to make a report under this~~
10 ~~section if the report would be based upon information received in a~~
11 ~~communication that is:~~

12 (1) ~~made to a member of the clergy acting in his or her capacity as~~
13 ~~spiritual advisor;~~

14 (2) ~~intended by the parties to be confidential at the time the~~
15 ~~communication is made;~~

16 (3) ~~intended by the communicant to be an act of contrition or a matter of~~
17 ~~conscience; and~~

18 (4) ~~required to be confidential by religious law, doctrine, or tenet.~~

19 [Repealed.]

20 (k) ~~When a member of the clergy receives information about abuse or~~
21 ~~neglect of a child in a manner other than as described in subsection (j) of this~~

1 ~~section, he or she is required to report on the basis of that information even~~
2 ~~though he or she may have also received a report of abuse or neglect about the~~
3 ~~same person or incident in the manner described in subsection (j) of this~~
4 ~~section.~~ [Repealed.]

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6 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.