

H.880

Introduced by Representatives Cole of Hartford, Greer of Bennington, Boutin  
of Barre City, Carris Duncan of Whitingham, Emmons of  
Springfield, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Burlington,  
Kleppner of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, McGill of  
Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; child welfare services; reporting abuse of children;  
mandated reporters

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to repeal the  
four-pronged exception that permits clergy not to report child abuse and  
neglect when it is received in confidence while acting as a spiritual advisor.  
Additionally, the bill proposes to repeal a related provision mandating the  
reporting of information that falls outside of the exception even though the  
information may have been learned in a manner that falls within the exception.

An act relating to repealing the exception for clergy to report child abuse  
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19 [Repealed.]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~~

5 \* \* \*

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