

1 S.239

2 Introduced by Senator Vyhovsky

3 Referred to Committee on Health and Welfare

4 Date: January 13, 2026

5 Subject: Human services; reporting abuse or neglect of children

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish the  
7 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Working Group for the purpose of  
8 examining the existing statutes, rules, and policies regarding the reporting of  
9 abuse and neglect of a child and recommending changes to such to modernize  
10 them and reflect current best practices.

11 An act relating to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Working Group

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

13 ~~§ 1. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING WORKING GROUP~~

14 ~~(a) There is created the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Working~~  
15 ~~Group for the purpose of examining the existing statutes, rules, and policies~~  
16 ~~regarding the reporting of abuse and neglect of a child and recommending~~  
17 ~~changes to such to modernize them and reflect current best practices.~~

18 ~~(b) The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:~~

1 ~~(1) the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation or designee;~~

2 ~~(2) the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim~~

3 ~~Services or designee;~~

4 ~~(3) a co-executive director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic~~

5 ~~and Sexual Violence or designee;~~

6 ~~(4) a member, appointed by the Attorney General;~~

7 ~~(5) a member, appointed by the Chief Administrative Judge; and~~

8 ~~(6) a member, appointed by the Commissioner for Children and~~

9 ~~Families.~~

10 (c) The Working Group shall report its findings and any recommended

11 legislative proposal to the General Assembly on or before November 1, 2026.

12 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

13 ~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

*Sec. 1. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING WORKING GROUP*

*(a) There is created the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Working Group for the purpose of examining the existing statutes and the Department for Children and Families' rules and policies regarding mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect of a child and recommending changes to modernize them and reflect current best practices.*

*(b) The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:*

*(1) the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation or designee;*

*(2) the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services or designee;*

*(3) a co-executive director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or designee;*

*(4) the Attorney General or designee;*

(5) the Chief Administrative Judge or designee;

(6) two members from the Department for Children and Families' Family Services Division, appointed by the Deputy Commissioner of the Division;

(7) the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont or designee;  
and

(8) the Vermont Child, Youth, and Family Advocate.

(c) In conducting its work, the Working Group shall consult with stakeholders, including:

(1) Vermont Children's Alliance and representation from Child Advocacy Centers;

(2) the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs;

(3) KidSafe Collaborative;

(4) Voices for Vermont's Children;

(5) Vermont Parent Representation Center;

(6) Disability Rights Vermont;

(7) medical partners, such as the University of Vermont's Child Safe Program; and

(8) individuals with lived experience as child victims of abuse and neglect.

(d) On or before January 15, 2027, the Working Group shall report its findings and any recommended legislative proposal to the House Committee on Human Services, Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and Senate and House Committees on Judiciary.

(1) Any recommendations should remain consistent with federal requirements under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which establishes minimum standards related to state definitions of abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, and emotional maltreatment.

(2) To promote efficiency and avoid duplicative work, the Working Group shall leverage the work of the Children's Justice Act Task Force and the Vermont Citizens Advisory Board (VCAB), which serves as Vermont's CAPTA citizen review panel.

(3) The Working Group shall consider best practices from other states in development of its recommendations.

(e) The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

(1) The Working Group shall convene its first meeting on or before August 15, 2026.

(2) The Working Group shall elect a chair at its first meeting.

(3) Five members shall constitute a quorum for meeting purposes.

**Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This act shall take effect on passage.