

HB 1565-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2438

12/09

HOUSE BILL **1565-FN**

AN ACT relative to the penalty for false reports of suspected abuse and neglect made to the division for children, youth, and families.

SPONSORS: Rep. Spillane, Rock. 2; Rep. Cole, Hills. 26; Rep. Aures, Merr. 13; Rep. McFarlane, Graf. 18; Rep. Notter, Hills. 12; Rep. Kofalt, Hills. 32; Rep. Morton, Hills. 39; Rep. Ammon, Hills. 42; Rep. Roy, Rock. 31; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18

COMMITTEE: Children and Family Law

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ANALYSIS

This bill provides that reports of suspected abuse and neglect may include the name of the person making the report and that a person who makes a false report maliciously or with the intent to cause harm shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. The bill also creates a private right of action for civil damages against a person who makes a false report of suspected abuse or neglect.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.  
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~  
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six*

AN ACT relative to the penalty for false reports of suspected abuse and neglect made to the division for children, youth, and families.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 1 Child Protection Act; Reporting Law; Nature of Report; Liability. Amend RSA 169-C:30 and  
2 RSA 169-C:31 to read as follows:

3 169-C:30 Nature and Content of Report. An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone  
4 or otherwise, and followed within 48 hours by a report in writing, if so requested, to the department.  
5 Such report shall, if known, contain the name and address of the child suspected of being neglected  
6 or abused and the person responsible for the child's welfare, the specific information indicating  
7 neglect or the nature and extent of the child's injuries (including any evidence of previous injuries),  
8 the identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such neglect or abuse, and  
9 any other information that might be helpful in establishing neglect or abuse or that may be required  
10 by the department. ***Reports made to the department may include the name, address, or***  
11 ***phone number of the person or persons making the report of suspected abuse or neglect of a***  
12 ***child under this chapter.***

13 169-C:31 Immunity From Liability.

14 ***I.*** Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report pursuant to this chapter or  
15 who provides information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in  
16 connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good faith report of child  
17 abuse or neglect, is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or  
18 imposed. Any such participant has the same immunity with respect to participation in any  
19 investigation by the department or judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

20 ***II.*** ***Nothing in this section shall provide civil or criminal immunity for a***  
21 ***professional mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to make a report of suspected abuse***  
22 ***or neglect under RSA 169-C:29 or for a person who knowingly files a false report of abuse or***  
23 ***neglect.***

24 2 New Sections; Child Abuse; Intentional False Report; Civil Liability. Amend RSA 169-C by  
25 inserting after section 31 the following new sections:

26 169-C:31-a Intentional False Report of Abuse or Neglect. A person is guilty of a misdemeanor if  
27 he or she knowingly provides false information or causes another to provide false information of  
28 suspected child abuse or neglect as defined by RSA 169-C:3 to the department or to any professional  
29 mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse identified in RSA 169-C:29.

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1           169-C:31-b Civil Liability. Any person harmed by the intentional submission of a false report of  
2 abuse or neglect under RSA 169-C:31-a may bring a civil action against the responsible party for  
3 monetary damages and other appropriate relief.

4           3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

**HB 1565-FN- FISCAL NOTE  
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to the penalty for false reports of suspected abuse and neglect made to the division for children, youth, and families.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

<b>Estimated State Impact</b>				
	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund</i>	None			
<b>Expenditures*</b>	Indeterminable			
<i>Funding Source</i>	General Fund			
<b>Appropriations*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source</i>	None			

\*Expenditure = Cost of bill      \*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

<b>Estimated Political Subdivision Impact</b>				
	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>
<b>County Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>County Expenditures</b>	Indeterminable			
<b>Local Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Local Expenditures</b>	Indeterminable			

**METHODOLOGY:**

This bill adds, deletes, or modifies a criminal penalty, or changes statute to which there is a penalty for violation. Therefore, this bill may have an impact on the judicial and correctional systems, which could affect prosecution, incarceration, probation, and parole costs, for the state, as well as county and local governments. A summary of such costs can be found at: [https://gencourt.state.nh.us/lba/Budget/Fiscal\\_Notes/JudicialCorrectionalCosts.pdf](https://gencourt.state.nh.us/lba/Budget/Fiscal_Notes/JudicialCorrectionalCosts.pdf).

In addition, the bill allows those harmed by the intentional submission of a false report of abuse or neglect under RSA 169-C:31 to bring civil actions for monetary damages and other relief. The Judicial Branch has provided the following information relative to civil case costs and fees:

**NH Judicial Branch Average Civil Case Estimates**

<b>Judicial Branch Average Cost</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
Superior Court Complex Civil Case	\$1,283	\$1,342
Superior Court Routine Civil Case	\$476	\$495

**Common Civil Case Fees**

<b>Superior Court Fees</b>	<b>As of 07/01/25</b>
Original Entry Fee	\$325
Third-Party Claim	\$325
Motion to Reopen	\$195

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Judicial Branch, Judicial Council, Department of Justice, Department of Corrections, New Hampshire Association of Counties, and New Hampshire Municipal Association