

HB 553-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0768

11/09

HOUSE BILL **553-FN**

AN ACT relative to the definition of abuse and neglect and conditions triggering a rebuttable presumption of harm in abuse and neglect cases.

SPONSORS: Rep. Gregg, Hills. 7; Rep. DeSimone, Rock. 18; Rep. Grossman, Rock. 11; Rep. Kuttab, Rock. 17; Rep. McMahon, Rock. 17; Rep. Nelson, Rock. 13; Rep. Petrigno, Hills. 43; Rep. Raymond, Hills. 5; Rep. Rice, Hills. 38; Rep. M. Pearson, Rock. 34; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Long, Dist 20; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13

COMMITTEE: Children and Family Law

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ANALYSIS

This bill makes modifications to the purpose statement, definitions, and terms of rebuttable presumption for abuse and 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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 Five*

AN ACT relative to the definition of abuse and neglect and conditions triggering a rebuttable presumption of harm in abuse and neglect cases.

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

1 1 Purpose; Modifications. Amend RSA 169-C:2 to read as follows:

2 169-C:2 Purpose.

3 I. It is the primary purpose of this chapter, through the mandatory reporting of suspected  
4 instances of child abuse or neglect, to provide protection to children whose life, health or **physical,**  
5 **emotional, or psychological** welfare is endangered. The best interest of the child shall be the  
6 primary consideration of the court in all proceedings under this chapter.

7 II. It is a further purpose of this chapter to establish a judicial framework to protect the  
8 rights of ~~[all parties involved]~~ **children, parents, and guardians** in the adjudication of child abuse  
9 or neglect cases. Each child coming within the provisions of this chapter shall receive, preferably in  
10 the child's own home **or the community**, the care, emotional security, guidance, and control that  
11 will promote the child's best interest~~[- and, if].~~ **If** the child should be removed from the control of his  
12 or her parents, guardian, or custodian, adequate care shall be secured for the child, **preferably in**  
13 **the community.**

14 **III.** This chapter seeks to coordinate efforts by parents and state and local authorities, in  
15 cooperation with private agencies and organizations, citizens' groups, and concerned individuals, to:

16 (a) Protect the ~~[safety]~~ **physical, emotional, and psychological welfare** of the child,  
17 **acknowledging the trauma caused to the child by abuse and neglect.**

18 (b) Take such action as may be necessary to prevent the abuse or neglect of children.

19 (c) ~~[Determine if the preservation of family unity is in the best interest of the child.]~~  
20 **Presume that family unity is in the best interest of the child; but, if it is determined to not**  
21 **be in the child's best interest, to secure placement in the least restrictive setting, as laid out**  
22 **in RSA 169-C:19-h. There shall be frequent review of each child removed from the home**  
23 **with the goal to return the child home or to the community as quickly as possible**

24 (d) Provide protection, treatment, and rehabilitation, as needed, to children ~~[placed in~~  
25 ~~alternative care]~~ **under the care and custody or legal supervision of the department, whether**  
26 **placed in the home or in out-of-home care.**

27 (e) Provide assistance to parents **and guardians** to deal with and correct problems in  
28 order to ~~[avoid]~~ **prevent** removal of children from~~[the family]~~ **their home.**

29 ~~[H].~~ **IV.** This chapter shall be liberally construed to the end that its purpose may be carried  
30 out, to wit:

1 (a) To encourage the mental, emotional, and physical development of each child coming  
2 within the provisions of this chapter, by providing the child with the protection, care, treatment,  
3 counseling, supervision, and rehabilitative resources which the child needs and has a right to  
4 receive.

5 (b) To achieve the foregoing purposes~~[and policies, whenever it is in the best interest of~~  
6 ~~the child,]~~ by keeping a child in~~[contact with his or her home community and in a family~~  
7 ~~environment by]~~ **his or her home, and** preserving the unity of the family and separating the child  
8 from his or her parents only when the ~~[safety]~~ **physical, emotional or psychological welfare** of  
9 the child is **at risk or** in danger or when it is clearly necessary for the child's welfare or the interests  
10 of the public safety and when it can be clearly shown that a change in custody will be in the best  
11 interest of the child; ~~[and]~~

12 (c) **To ensure that if a child must be removed from his or her home, the child**  
13 **shall be placed in accordance with RSA 169-C:19-h, with kin or fictive kin if such a**  
14 **placement is safe and available, otherwise in a licensed foster home, ensuring contact with**  
15 **his or her home community and in a family environment; and, only as a last resort and if**  
16 **necessary for the emotional, mental health, behavioral health, or psychological needs of**  
17 **the child, be placed in group home or child care institution licensed and certified pursuant**  
18 **to RSA 170-E;**

19 (d) **To provide trauma-informed services and care to system-involved children,**  
20 **families, and caregivers; and**

21 ~~[(e)]~~ (e) To provide effective judicial procedures through which the provisions of this  
22 chapter are executed and enforced and which ~~[recognize]~~ **recognizes as the primary determinant,**  
23 **the safety, welfare, and best interest of the child;** and ~~[enforce]~~ **protects** the constitutional and  
24 other rights of ~~[the]~~ **all** parties and assures them a fair hearing.

25 2 Definitions; Modifications. Amend RSA 169-C:3 to read as follows:

26 169-C:3 Definitions.

27 When used in this chapter and unless the specific context indicates otherwise:

28 I. "Abandoned" means the child has been left by ~~[his]~~ **their** parent, guardian or custodian,  
29 without provision for care, **including but not limited to their physical, emotional or**  
30 **psychological well-being;** supervision; or, financial support although financially able ~~[to provide~~  
31 ~~such support];~~ **or assisted to do so, but not if the child has been left due to a lack of**  
32 **availability of mental or behavioral health services.**

33 II. ~~["Abused child"]~~ "Abuse" means **any of the following:** ~~[any child who has been]:~~

34 (a) ~~[Sexually abused]~~ **Sexual abuse of a child**~~[-or].~~

35 (b) ~~[Intentionally physically injured]; or~~

1 ~~(e) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems]~~  
2 **Emotional harm to a child in such a manner as** generally recognized to result from ~~[consistent]~~  
3 mistreatment or neglect, **including psychological maltreatment**~~[; or]~~.

4 ~~(c) [Physically injured]~~ **Physical injury to a child** by other than accidental means, **or**  
5 **indeterminate means if the parents, guardians, or custodians are the primary or sole**  
6 **caregivers and have offered no reasonable alternative explanation for said injuries**~~[; or]~~.

7 ~~[(e)] (d) [Subjected]~~ **Subjection of a child**, by any person, to human trafficking as  
8 defined in RSA 633:7.~~[; or]~~

9 ~~[(f)] (e) [Subjected]~~ **Subjection of a child** to an act prohibited by RSA 632-A:10-d.

10 III. "Adjudicatory hearing" means a hearing to determine the truth of the allegations in the  
11 petition filed under this chapter.

12 IV. [Repealed].

13 V. "Child" means any person who has not reached [his] their eighteenth birthday.

14 VI. "Child care agency" means a "child day care agency" as defined in RSA 170-E:2, IV or a  
15 "child care agency" as defined in RSA 170-E:25, II.

16 VII. "Child placing agency" means the department, Catholic charities of New Hampshire, or  
17 child and family services of New Hampshire, or any successor organization.

18 VII-a. "Compelling reason" for assessing permanency at an early permanency hearing  
19 includes circumstances where:

20 (a) Both parents, or only one parent if the other parent is deceased or not identified,  
21 have made no effort or only negligible efforts to comply with the dispositional orders;

22 (b) A ground exists for termination of parental rights for both parents, or for only one  
23 parent if the other parent is deceased or not identified, under one or more paragraphs of RSA 170-  
24 C:5; or

25 (c) There is another compelling reason to assess the permanency plan of reunification  
26 earlier than the 12-month permanency hearing.

27 VII-b. "Concurrent plan" means an alternate permanency plan in the event that a child  
28 cannot be safely reunified with his or her parents.

29 VIII. "Consent order" means a written agreement entered into among or between the parties  
30 regarding the facts and the disposition in a neglect or abuse case, and approved by the court.

31 IX. "Court" means the district court, unless otherwise indicated.

32 X. "Custodian" means an agency or person, other than a parent or guardian, licensed  
33 pursuant to RSA 170-E to whom legal custody of the child has been given by court order.

34 XI. "Dispositional hearing" means a hearing held after a finding of abuse or neglect to  
35 determine what dispositional order should be made on behalf of the child.

36 XII. "Department" means the Department of Health and Human Services.

1 XIII. "Foster home" means a residential care facility licensed pursuant to RSA 170-E for  
2 child care in which family care and training are provided on a regular basis for no more than 6  
3 unrelated children, unless all the children are of common parentage.

4 XIII-a. "Founded report" means a report made pursuant to this chapter for which the  
5 department finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the child who is the subject of such report  
6 is abused or neglected.

7 XIV. "Guardian" means a parent or person appointed by a court having jurisdiction with the  
8 duty and authority to make important decisions in matters having a permanent effect on the life and  
9 development of the child, and to be concerned about the general welfare of the child. Such duty and  
10 authority include but are not necessarily limited either in number or kind to:

11 (a) The authority to consent: (1) to marriage, (2) to enlistment in the armed forces of the  
12 United States, and (3) to major medical, psychiatric and surgical treatment, (4) to represent the  
13 child in legal actions; and (5) to make other decisions of substantial legal significance concerning the  
14 child;

15 (b) The authority and duty of reasonable visitation, except to the extent that such right  
16 of visitation has been limited by court order; and

17 (c) The rights and responsibilities of legal custody except where legal custody has been  
18 vested in another individual or in an authorized agency.

19 XIV-a. "Household member" means any person living with the parent, guardian, or  
20 custodian of the child from time to time or on a regular basis, who is involved occasionally or  
21 regularly with the care of the child.

22 XV. "Imminent danger" means circumstances or surroundings causing immediate peril or  
23 risk to a child's *psychological or emotional well-being, physical or mental* health, or life.

24 XVI. "Institutional child abuse or neglect" means situations of known or suspected child  
25 abuse or neglect wherein the person responsible for the child's welfare is a foster parent or is an  
26 employee of a public or private residential home, institution or agency. ***This includes, but is not***  
27 ***limited to, use of restraint or seclusion under circumstances which do not indicate that***  
28 ***restraint or seclusion is necessary to ensure the immediate physical safety of a person due***  
29 ***to substantial and imminent risk of serious bodily harm to the child or others.***

30 XVII. "Legal custody" means a status created by court order embodying the following rights  
31 and responsibilities unless otherwise modified by court order:

32 (a) The right to determine where and with whom the child shall live;

33 (b) The right to have the physical possession of the child;

34 (c) The right and the duty to protect and constructively discipline the child; and

35 (d) The responsibility to provide the child with food, clothing, shelter, education,  
36 emotional security and ordinary medical care provided that such rights and responsibilities shall be  
37 exercised subject to the power, rights, duties and responsibilities of the guardian of the child and

1 subject to residual parental rights and responsibilities if these have not been terminated by judicial  
2 decree.

3 XVIII. "Legal supervision" means a legal status created by court order wherein the child is  
4 permitted to remain in his home under the supervision of a child placing agency subject to further  
5 court order.

6 XIX. [~~"Neglected child"~~] **"Neglect"** means [~~a child~~] **any of the following:**

7 (a) [~~Who has been abandoned~~] **Abandonment of a child** by his or her parents,  
8 guardian, or custodian[~~;~~].

9 (b) [~~Who is without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required~~  
10 ~~by law, or other care or control necessary for the child's physical, mental, or emotional health, when~~  
11 ~~it is established that the child's health has suffered or is likely to suffer serious impairment; and the~~  
12 ~~deprivation is not due primarily to the lack of financial means of the parents, guardian, or custodian;~~  
13 ~~or~~] **Failure by a child's parent, guardian, or custodian, either deliberately or through**  
14 **negligence or inability, to provide proper supervision, care, and attention to a child, or**  
15 **provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or education, or proper medical care, and it is**  
16 **established that the child's physical, mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing has**  
17 **suffered or is likely to suffer serious impairment, when such inability is not due solely to**  
18 **inadequate economic means.**

19 (c) [~~Whose parents, guardian or custodian are unable~~] **Inability of a parent,**  
20 **guardian, or custodian** to discharge their responsibilities to and for the child because of  
21 incarceration, hospitalization or other physical or mental incapacity[~~;~~].

22 (d) **Entrustment of the care of a child by a parent, guardian, or custodian to an**  
23 **individual who presents a risk of inability to provide safe care, and as a result of such**  
24 **entrustment, the child's physical, mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing has**  
25 **suffered, or is likely to suffer serious physical or psychological impairment. The following**  
26 **individuals are presumed to present such risk: individuals subject to active protective or**  
27 **restraining orders; individuals previously convicted of sex crimes; individuals convicted of**  
28 **violent crimes; individuals with recent instances of substance misuse or who have been**  
29 **convicted of or alleged to have engaged in manufacturing, sale, or trafficking of illegal**  
30 **drugs.**

31 (e) **Exposure of a child in utero to alcohol or drugs such that, once born, the**  
32 **child's health or welfare is threatened by the exposure, unless the exposure is due to the**  
33 **mother's having been prescribed or recommended to take the drugs by a licensed health**  
34 **care provider and the mother was monitored by the provider or other health care**  
35 **professional during the pregnancy.**

36 (f) [~~Provided, that no~~] **No** child who is, in good faith, under treatment solely by spiritual  
37 means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious

1 denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof shall, for that reason alone, be considered to  
2 be a neglected child under this chapter.

3 XX. "Notice" means communication given in person or in writing to the parent, guardian,  
4 custodian or other interested party not having custody or control of the child, of the time and place  
5 fixed for hearing; and it shall be given in all cases, unless it appears to the court that such notice will  
6 be ineffectual.

7 XX-a. "Out-of-home placement" means the placement of a child in substitute care with  
8 someone other than the child's biological parent or parents, adoptive parent or parents, or legal  
9 guardian.

10 XXI. "Parent" means mother, father, adoptive parent, stepparent, but such term shall not  
11 include a parent as to whom the parent-child relationship has been terminated by judicial decree or  
12 voluntary relinquishment.

13 XXI-a. "Party having an interest" means the child; the guardian ad litem of the child; the  
14 child's parent, guardian or custodian; the state; or any household member subject to court order.

15 XXI-b. "Permanency hearing" means a court hearing for a child in an out-of-home placement  
16 to review, modify, and/or implement the permanency plan or to adopt the concurrent plan.

17 XXI-c. "Permanency plan" means a plan for a child in an out-of-home placement that is  
18 adopted by the court and provides for timely reunification, adoption through termination of parental  
19 rights or parental surrender, guardianship with a fit and willing relative or another appropriate  
20 party, or another planned permanent living arrangement.

21 XXII. "A person responsible for a child's welfare" includes the child's parent, guardian or  
22 custodian, as well as the person providing out-of-home care of the child, if that person is not the  
23 parent, guardian or custodian. For purposes of this definition, "out-of-home care" includes child day  
24 care, and any other settings in which children are given care outside of their homes.

25 XXIII. "Probable cause" means facts and circumstances based upon accurate and reliable  
26 information, including hearsay, that would justify a reasonable person to believe that a child subject  
27 to a report under this chapter is abused or neglected.

28 XXIV. "Protective custody" means the status of a child who has been taken into physical  
29 custody by a police officer or juvenile probation and parole officer because the child was in such  
30 circumstances or surroundings which presented an imminent danger to the child's health or life and  
31 where there was not sufficient time to obtain a court order.

32 XXV. "Protective supervision" means the status of a child who has been placed with a child  
33 placing agency pending the adjudicatory hearing.

34 XXV-a. "Psychological maltreatment" means ~~[pervasive and emotionally abusive behavior,~~  
35 ~~which shall include, but not be limited to, patterns of threatening, berating, or demeaning behavior]~~  
36 ***a pattern of threatening, demeaning, or humiliating behavior directed at the child, which***  
37 ***may include, but is not limited to: rejecting, which shall include giving constant criticism***

1 *or belittling; terrorizing, which shall include threatening abandonment or harm;*  
2 *corrupting, which shall include child involvement in or exposure to criminal activities;*  
3 *coercing, which shall include compelling to action using threat or force; and, which may*  
4 *adversely affect the child cognitively, emotionally, and socially.*

5 XXV-b. "Psychotropic medication" means a drug prescribed by a licensed medical  
6 practitioner, to treat illnesses that affect psychological functioning, perception, behavior, or mood.

7 XXV-c. "Medication restraint" means the involuntary administration of any medication,  
8 including a psychotropic medication, for the purpose of immediate control of behavior.

9 XXVI. "Relative" means parent, grandparent, brother, sister, stepparent, stepbrother,  
10 stepsister, uncle, aunt, nieces, nephews or first and second cousins.

11 XXVII. "Residual parental rights and responsibilities" means those rights and  
12 responsibilities remaining with the parent after the transfer of legal custody or guardianship except  
13 guardianship pursuant to termination of parental rights, including, but not limited to, right of  
14 visitation, consent to adoption, right to determine religious affiliation and responsibilities for  
15 support.

16 XXVII-a. "Serious impairment" means ~~[a substantial weakening or diminishment of]~~ ***an***  
17 ***adverse impact on*** a child's emotional, physical, ***psychological***, or mental ~~[health or of a child's]~~  
18 ***well-being or safety, and [general well-being] which may result from a single event or from a***  
19 ***consistent pattern of behavior, and may be currently observed or predicted.*** The following  
20 circumstances shall be considered in determining the likelihood that a child may suffer serious  
21 impairment, ***with a trauma-informed lens, as defined in RSA 169-C:3, XXVIII:***

22 (a) The age and developmental level of the child; ***although the child's age or ability***  
23 ***to care for themselves is not dispositive of the potential harm caused by other factors.***

24 (b) ~~[Any recognized mental, emotional, or physical disabilities]~~ ***The child's social,***  
25 ***emotional, learning, mental health, behavioral health, or physical conditions.***

26 (c) School attendance and ~~[performance]~~ ***the child's ability to fully engage in school.***

27 (d) The child's ~~[-illegal use of controlled substances, or the child's contact with other]~~  
28 ***exposure to*** persons involved in the ~~[illegal use of controlled substances]~~ ***misuse*** or sale,  
29 ***manufacture, or trafficking of legal or illegal substances or the parent's or child's*** abuse of  
30 alcohol.

31 (e) Exposure to incidents of domestic or sexual violence.

32 (f) Any documented failure to thrive.

33 (g) Any history of frequent illness or injury.

34 (h) Findings in other proceedings.

35 (i) The condition of the child's place of residence.

36 (j) Assessments or evaluations of the child conducted by qualified professionals.

37 (k) Such other factors that may be determined to be appropriate or relevant.

1           *(l) Any single incident or occurrence of serious injury or illness.*

2           *(m) Parentification of a child, which occurs when a child is regularly expected*  
3 *to take on parental responsibilities, including but not limited to providing emotional or*  
4 *practical support for a parent or another individual, beyond what would be reasonably*  
5 *expected for the child's age and circumstances, instead of receiving that care and support*  
6 *themselves.*

7           XXVII-b. "Sexual abuse" means the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement,  
8 or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in, any  
9 sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual  
10 depiction of such conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation  
11 of children, or incest with children. With respect to the definition of sexual abuse, the term "child" or  
12 "children" means any individual who is under the age of 18 years.

13           XXVII-c. "Screened-out report" means a report made pursuant to this chapter that the  
14 department has determined does not rise to the level of a credible report of abuse or neglect and is  
15 not referred for assessment.

16           ***XXVII-d. "Trauma Informed" means a service system in which all parties involved***  
17 ***recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the***  
18 ***system including children, families, caregivers, and service providers. It is an expansion of***  
19 ***the system's concerns beyond children's physical safety and permanence to include***  
20 ***children's psychological safety; attempts to address trauma-related needs by promoting the***  
21 ***well-being and resilience of children, families, caregivers, and service providers; treats***  
22 ***children and families as partners in their own care; and, collaborates with other relevant***  
23 ***agencies and systems.***

24           XXVIII. "Unfounded report" means a report made pursuant to this chapter for which the  
25 department determines that there is, ***by a preponderance of the evidence***, insufficient evidence to  
26 substantiate a finding that the child is abused or neglected.

27           XXIX. A report that is "unfounded but with reasonable concern" means a report made  
28 pursuant to this chapter for which the department determines that there is probable cause to believe  
29 the child was abused or neglected, but for which there is insufficient evidence to establish by a  
30 preponderance of the evidence that the child was abused or neglected.

31           3 Presumption of Harm. Amend RSA 169-C:12-f to read as follows:

32           169-C:12-f Rebuttable Presumption of Harm.

33           There shall be a rebuttable presumption that a child's [health] ***emotional, physical,***  
34 ***psychological, or mental well-being*** has suffered or is likely to suffer serious impairment by  
35 exposure to any of the following conduct:

36           I. Evidence of a parent's, guardian's, or custodian's substance misuse [~~that is adversely~~  
37 ~~affecting a child's care or supervision, when that parent, guardian, or custodian is not actively~~

1 ~~engaged in treatment]~~ ***or sale, manufacturing, or trafficking of legal or illegal substances,***  
2 ***shall create a rebuttable presumption that the child's physical, emotional, or psychological***  
3 ***well-being has suffered or is very likely to suffer serious impairment. The presumption may***  
4 ***be rebutted by evidence of the parent's compliance with treatment for such use or***  
5 ***dependence.***

6 II. Evidence of a parent's, guardian's, or custodian's impaired driving or operating of a motor  
7 vehicle while a child is in the vehicle; or

8 III. Evidence of a parent's, guardian's, or custodian's exposure of a child to:

9 ~~[(a) Physical violence directed at a sibling, the other parent, or another person living in~~  
10 ~~the home; or~~

11 ~~(b) Psychological maltreatment directed at the child, a sibling, the other parent, or~~  
12 ~~another person living in the home.]~~ ***physical violence, verbal abuse, or psychological***  
13 ***maltreatment directed at the child, a sibling, the other parent or significant other, or***  
14 ***another person living in the home.***

15 IV. The rebuttable presumption of harm established in paragraph III shall not apply to  
16 victims of domestic violence who are subject to an abuse or neglect ***investigation or*** petition filed  
17 pursuant to this chapter as a result of an incident or incidents in which that parent, guardian, or  
18 caregiver was the victim.

19 ***V. Evidence of serious injury, broken bones, or unexplained injury to any non-***  
20 ***ambulatory child, or frequent illnesses that are not being adequately addressed or***  
21 ***controlled.***

22 ***4 Studies; Abuse.*** Amend RSA 189:10, II to read as follows:

23 II. The school board shall ensure that health education, physical education to include the  
24 importance of exercise, and wellness are taught to pupils as part of the curriculum, specifically to  
25 include physiology, hygiene, health and interpersonal relationships, physical education, and  
26 wellness, as they relate to the effects of alcohol and other drugs, prevention of sexual violence, child  
27 abuse as established in the definition of [~~abused child~~] ***"abuse"*** under RSA 169-C:3, II, human  
28 immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and sexually  
29 transmitted diseases on the human system.

30 ***5 Genital Mutilation; Abuse.*** Amend RSA 632-A:10-d, IV to read as follows:

31 IV. Any child subjected to conduct prohibited by paragraph I, but which is not justified  
32 pursuant to paragraph III, shall be considered [~~an abused child~~] ***to have suffered abuse*** pursuant  
33 to RSA 169-C:3, II.

34 ***6 Effective Date.*** This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 553-FN- FISCAL NOTE**  
**AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT                    relative to the definition of abuse and neglect and conditions triggering a rebuttable presumption of harm in abuse and neglect cases.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Department of Health and Human Services states that any cost associated with this bill can be absorbed within its operating budget, and that the bill will therefore have no fiscal impact. The Judicial Branch likewise states the bill will have no fiscal impact.

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Judicial Branch and Department of Health and Human Services