S-3391.2			

SENATE BILL 6295

State of Washington 63rd Legislature 2014 Regular Session

By Senators Mullet, Tom, Kohl-Welles, and Darneille

Read first time 01/20/14. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to withholding medical treatment in favor of faith-
- 2 based or metaphysical healing efforts; amending RCW 9A.42.005 and
- 3 26.44.020; and reenacting and amending RCW 26.44.030.

7

8

10

11

12 13

1415

16

17

18

19

- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 9A.42.005 and 1997 c 392 s 507 are each amended to read as follows:
 - The legislature finds that there is a significant need to protect children and dependent persons, including frail elder and vulnerable adults, from abuse and neglect by their parents, by persons entrusted with their physical custody, or by persons employed to provide them with the basic necessities of life. The legislature further finds that such abuse and neglect often takes the forms of either withholding from them the basic necessities of life, including food, water, shelter, clothing, and health care, or abandoning them, or both. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature that criminal penalties be imposed on those guilty of such abuse or neglect. ((It is the intent of the legislature that a person who, in good faith, is furnished Christian Science treatment by a duly accredited Christian Science practitioner in lieu of medical care is not considered deprived of medically

p. 1 SB 6295

- 1 necessary health care or abandoned.)) Prosecutions under this chapter
- 2 shall be consistent with the rules of evidence, including hearsay,
- 3 under law.

4

5

6

7

8

1011

12

13

14

15 16

17

18

19 20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

2829

3031

32

3334

35

36

37

Sec. 2. RCW 26.44.020 and 2012 c 259 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

- (1) "Abuse or neglect" means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, excluding conduct permitted under RCW 9A.16.100; or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined in this section.
- (2) "Child" or "children" means any person under the age of eighteen years of age.
- (3) "Child protective services" means those services provided by the department designed to protect children from child abuse and neglect and safeguard such children from future abuse and neglect, and conduct investigations of child abuse and neglect Investigations may be conducted regardless of the location of the alleged abuse or neglect. Child protective services includes referral to services to ameliorate conditions that endanger the welfare of children, the coordination of necessary programs and services relevant to the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and services to children to ensure that each child has a permanent home. In determining whether protective services should be provided, the department shall not decline to provide such services solely because of the child's unwillingness or developmental inability to describe the nature and severity of the abuse or neglect.
- (4) "Child protective services section" means the child protective services section of the department.
- (5) "Children's advocacy center" means a child-focused facility in good standing with the state chapter for children's advocacy centers and that coordinates a multidisciplinary process for the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of sexual and other types of child abuse. Children's advocacy centers provide a location for forensic interviews

and coordinate access to services such as, but not limited to, medical evaluations, advocacy, therapy, and case review by multidisciplinary teams within the context of county protocols as defined in RCW 26.44.180 and 26.44.185.

- (6) "Clergy" means any regularly licensed or ordained minister, priest, or rabbi of any church or religious denomination, whether acting in an individual capacity or as an employee or agent of any public or private organization or institution.
- 9 (7) "Court" means the superior court of the state of Washington, 10 juvenile department.
 - (8) "Department" means the state department of social and health services.
 - (9) "Family assessment" means a comprehensive assessment of child safety, risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, and family strengths and needs that is applied to a child abuse or neglect report. Family assessment does not include a determination as to whether child abuse or neglect occurred, but does determine the need for services to address the safety of the child and the risk of subsequent maltreatment.
 - (10) "Family assessment response" means a way of responding to certain reports of child abuse or neglect made under this chapter using a differential response approach to child protective services. The family assessment response shall focus on the safety of the child, the integrity and preservation of the family, and shall assess the status of the child and the family in terms of risk of abuse and neglect including the parent's or guardian's or other caretaker's capacity and willingness to protect the child and, if necessary, plan and arrange the provision of services to reduce the risk and otherwise support the family. No one is named as a perpetrator, and no investigative finding is entered in the record as a result of a family assessment.
- 31 (11) "Founded" means the determination following an investigation 32 by the department that, based on available information, it is more 33 likely than not that child abuse or neglect did occur.
 - (12) "Inconclusive" means the determination following an investigation by the department, prior to October 1, 2008, that based on available information a decision cannot be made that more likely than not, child abuse or neglect did or did not occur.

p. 3 SB 6295

1 (13) "Institution" means a private or public hospital or any other 2 facility providing medical diagnosis, treatment, or care.

- (14) "Law enforcement agency" means the police department, the prosecuting attorney, the state patrol, the director of public safety, or the office of the sheriff.
- (15) "Malice" or "maliciously" means an intent, wish, or design to intimidate, annoy, or injure another person. Such malice may be inferred from an act done in willful disregard of the rights of another, or an act wrongfully done without just cause or excuse, or an act or omission of duty betraying a willful disregard of social duty.
- (16) "Negligent treatment or maltreatment" means an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety, including but not limited to conduct prohibited under RCW 9A.42.100. When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment shall be given great weight. The fact that siblings share a bedroom is not, in and of itself, negligent treatment or maltreatment. Poverty, homelessness, or exposure to domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010 that is perpetrated against someone other than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or maltreatment in and of itself.
- (17) "Pharmacist" means any registered pharmacist under chapter 18.64 RCW, whether acting in an individual capacity or as an employee or agent of any public or private organization or institution.
- (18) "Practitioner of the healing arts" or "practitioner" means a person licensed by this state to practice podiatric medicine and surgery, optometry, chiropractic, nursing, dentistry, osteopathic medicine and surgery, or medicine and surgery or to provide other health services. The term "practitioner" includes a duly accredited Christian Science practitioner. ((A person who is being furnished Christian Science treatment by a duly accredited Christian Science practitioner will not be considered, for that reason alone, a neglected person for the purposes of this chapter.))
- 37 (19) "Professional school personnel" include, but are not limited

1 to, teachers, counselors, administrators, child care facility
2 personnel, and school nurses.

3

4

5

6 7

8

9

18

19

2021

22

23

24

2526

2728

- (20) "Psychologist" means any person licensed to practice psychology under chapter 18.83 RCW, whether acting in an individual capacity or as an employee or agent of any public or private organization or institution.
- (21) "Screened-out report" means a report of alleged child abuse or neglect that the department has determined does not rise to the level of a credible report of abuse or neglect and is not referred for investigation.
- 11 (22) "Sexual exploitation" includes: (a) Allowing, permitting, or 12 encouraging a child to engage in prostitution by any person; or (b) 13 allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or 14 pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child by any 15 person.
- 16 (23) "Sexually aggressive youth" means a child who is defined in RCW 74.13.075(1)(b) as being a sexually aggressive youth.
 - (24) "Social service counselor" means anyone engaged in a professional capacity during the regular course of employment in encouraging or promoting the health, welfare, support, or education of children, or providing social services to adults or families, including mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, and domestic violence programs, whether in an individual capacity, or as an employee or agent of any public or private organization or institution.
 - (25) "Supervising agency" means an agency licensed by the state under RCW 74.15.090 or an Indian tribe under RCW 74.15.190 that has entered into a performance-based contract with the department to provide child welfare services.
- 29 (26) "Unfounded" means the determination following an investigation 30 by the department that available information indicates that, more 31 likely than not, child abuse or neglect did not occur, or that there is 32 insufficient evidence for the department to determine whether the 33 alleged child abuse did or did not occur.
- 34 Sec. 3. RCW 26.44.030 and 2013 c 273 s 2, 2013 c 48 s 2, and 2013 c 23 s 43 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:
- 36 (1)(a) When any practitioner, county coroner or medical examiner, 37 law enforcement officer, professional school personnel, registered or

p. 5 SB 6295

licensed nurse, social service counselor, psychologist, pharmacist, employee of the department of early learning, licensed or certified child care providers or their employees, employee of the department, probation officer, placement and liaison juvenile specialist, responsible living skills program staff, HOPE center staff, or state family and children's ombuds or any volunteer in the ombuds's office has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department as provided in RCW 26.44.040.

(b) When any person, in his or her official supervisory capacity with a nonprofit or for-profit organization, has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person over whom he or she regularly exercises supervisory authority, he or she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency, provided that the person alleged to have caused the abuse or neglect is employed by, contracted by, or volunteers with the organization and coaches, trains, educates, or counsels a child or children or regularly has unsupervised access to a child or children as part of the employment, contract, or voluntary service. No one shall be required to report under this section when he or she obtains the information solely as a result of a privileged communication as provided in RCW 5.60.060.

Nothing in this subsection (1)(b) shall limit a person's duty to report under (a) of this subsection.

For the purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply:

- (i) "Official supervisory capacity" means a position, status, or role created, recognized, or designated by any nonprofit or for-profit organization, either for financial gain or without financial gain, whose scope includes, but is not limited to, overseeing, directing, or managing another person who is employed by, contracted by, or volunteers with the nonprofit or for-profit organization.
- (ii) "Organization" includes a sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, trust, association, financial institution, governmental entity, other than the federal government, and any other individual or group engaged in a trade, occupation,

SB 6295 p. 6

enterprise, governmental function, charitable function, or similar activity in this state whether or not the entity is operated as a nonprofit or for-profit entity.

- (iii) "Reasonable cause" means a person witnesses or receives a credible written or oral report alleging abuse, including sexual contact, or neglect of a child.
- (iv) "Regularly exercises supervisory authority" means to act in his or her official supervisory capacity on an ongoing or continuing basis with regards to a particular person.
 - (v) "Sexual contact" has the same meaning as in RCW 9A.44.010.
- (c) The reporting requirement also applies to department of corrections personnel who, in the course of their employment, observe offenders or the children with whom the offenders are in contact. If, as a result of observations or information received in the course of his or her employment, any department of corrections personnel has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report the incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department as provided in RCW 26.44.040.
- (d) The reporting requirement shall also apply to any adult who has reasonable cause to believe that a child who resides with them, has suffered severe abuse, and is able or capable of making a report. For the purposes of this subsection, "severe abuse" means any of the following: Any single act of abuse that causes physical trauma of sufficient severity that, if left untreated, could cause death; any single act of sexual abuse that causes significant bleeding, deep bruising, or significant external or internal swelling; or more than one act of physical abuse, each of which causes bleeding, deep bruising, significant external or internal swelling, bone fracture, or unconsciousness.
- (e) The reporting requirement also applies to guardians ad litem, including court-appointed special advocates, appointed under Titles 11, 13, and 26 RCW, who in the course of their representation of children in these actions have reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected.
- (f) The reporting requirement in (a) of this subsection also applies to administrative and academic or athletic department

p. 7 SB 6295

employees, including student employees, of institutions of higher education, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and of private institutions of higher education.

- (g) The report must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than forty-eight hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect. The report must include the identity of the accused if known.
- (h) Cultural and religious child-rearing practices and beliefs that differ from general community standards do not, in and of themselves, create a duty to report under this section unless there is reasonable cause to believe the practices and beliefs pose a danger to the child's health, welfare, or safety.
- (2) The reporting requirement of subsection (1) of this section does not apply to the discovery of abuse or neglect that occurred during childhood if it is discovered after the child has become an adult. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe other children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused, the reporting requirement of subsection (1) of this section does apply.
- (3) Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect may report such incident to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department of social and health services as provided in RCW 26.44.040.
- (4) The department, upon receiving a report of an incident of alleged abuse or neglect pursuant to this chapter, involving a child who has died or has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means or who has been subjected to alleged sexual abuse, shall report such incident to the proper law enforcement agency. In emergency cases, where the child's welfare is endangered, the department shall notify the proper law enforcement agency within twenty-four hours after a report is received by the department. In all other cases, the department shall notify the law enforcement agency within seventy-two hours after a report is received by the department. If the department makes an oral report, a written report must also be made to the proper law enforcement agency within five days thereafter.
- (5) Any law enforcement agency receiving a report of an incident of alleged abuse or neglect pursuant to this chapter, involving a child who has died or has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him

or her other than by accidental means, or who has been subjected to alleged sexual abuse, shall report such incident in writing as provided in RCW 26.44.040 to the proper county prosecutor or city attorney for appropriate action whenever the law enforcement agency's investigation reveals that a crime may have been committed. The law enforcement agency shall also notify the department of all reports received and the law enforcement agency's disposition of them. In emergency cases, where the child's welfare is endangered, the law enforcement agency shall notify the department within twenty-four hours. In all other cases, the law enforcement agency shall notify the department within seventy-two hours after a report is received by the law enforcement agency.

- (6) Any county prosecutor or city attorney receiving a report under subsection (5) of this section shall notify the victim, any persons the victim requests, and the local office of the department, of the decision to charge or decline to charge a crime, within five days of making the decision.
- (7) The department may conduct ongoing case planning and consultation with those persons or agencies required to report under this section, with consultants designated by the department, and with designated representatives of Washington Indian tribes if the client information exchanged is pertinent to cases currently receiving child protective services. Upon request, the department shall conduct such planning and consultation with those persons required to report under this section if the department determines it is in the best interests of the child. Information considered privileged by statute and not directly related to reports required by this section must not be divulged without a valid written waiver of the privilege.
- (8) Any case referred to the department by a physician licensed under chapter 18.57 or 18.71 RCW on the basis of an expert medical opinion that child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault has occurred and that the child's safety will be seriously endangered if returned home, the department shall file a dependency petition unless a second licensed physician of the parents' choice believes that such expert medical opinion is incorrect. If the parents fail to designate a second physician, the department may make the selection. If a physician finds that a child has suffered abuse or neglect but that such abuse or neglect does not constitute imminent danger to the

p. 9 SB 6295

- child's health or safety, and the department agrees with the physician's assessment, the child may be left in the parents' home while the department proceeds with reasonable efforts to remedy parenting deficiencies.
 - (9) Persons or agencies exchanging information under subsection (7) of this section shall not further disseminate or release the information except as authorized by state or federal statute. Violation of this subsection is a misdemeanor.
 - (10) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect, the department shall make reasonable efforts to learn the name, address, and telephone number of each person making a report of abuse or neglect under this section. The department shall provide assurances of appropriate confidentiality of the identification of persons reporting under this section. If the department is unable to learn the information required under this subsection, the department shall only investigate cases in which:
 - (a) The department believes there is a serious threat of substantial harm to the child;
 - (b) The report indicates conduct involving a criminal offense that has, or is about to occur, in which the child is the victim; or
 - (c) The department has a prior founded report of abuse or neglect with regard to a member of the household that is within three years of receipt of the referral.
 - (11)(a) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect, the department shall use one of the following discrete responses to reports of child abuse or neglect that are screened in and accepted for departmental response:
 - (i) Investigation; or
- 29 (ii) Family assessment.

- 30 (b) In making the response in (a) of this subsection the department 31 shall:
- (i) Use a method by which to assign cases to investigation or family assessment which are based on an array of factors that may include the presence of: Imminent danger, level of risk, number of previous child abuse or neglect reports, or other presenting case characteristics, such as the type of alleged maltreatment and the age of the alleged victim. Age of the alleged victim shall not be used as the sole criterion for determining case assignment;

1 (ii) Allow for a change in response assignment based on new 2 information that alters risk or safety level;

- (iii) Allow families assigned to family assessment to choose to receive an investigation rather than a family assessment;
- (iv) Provide a full investigation if a family refuses the initial family assessment;
- (v) Provide voluntary services to families based on the results of the initial family assessment. If a family refuses voluntary services, and the department cannot identify specific facts related to risk or safety that warrant assignment to investigation under this chapter, and there is not a history of reports of child abuse or neglect related to the family, then the department must close the family assessment response case. However, if at any time the department identifies risk or safety factors that warrant an investigation under this chapter, then the family assessment response case must be reassigned to investigation;
- (vi) Conduct an investigation, and not a family assessment, in response to an allegation that, the department determines based on the intake assessment:
- (A) Poses a risk of "imminent harm" consistent with the definition provided in RCW 13.34.050, which includes, but is not limited to, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as defined in this chapter;
 - (B) Poses a serious threat of substantial harm to a child;
- (C) Constitutes conduct involving a criminal offense that has, or is about to occur, in which the child is the victim;
 - (D) The child is an abandoned child as defined in RCW 13.34.030;
- (E) The child is an adjudicated dependent child as defined in RCW 13.34.030, or the child is in a facility that is licensed, operated, or certified for care of children by the department under chapter 74.15 RCW, or by the department of early learning.
- (c) The department may not be held civilly liable for the decision to respond to an allegation of child abuse or neglect by using the family assessment response under this section unless the state or its officers, agents, or employees acted with reckless disregard.
- (12)(a) For reports of alleged abuse or neglect that are accepted for investigation by the department, the investigation shall be conducted within time frames established by the department in rule. In no case shall the investigation extend longer than ninety days from the

p. 11 SB 6295

date the report is received, unless the investigation is being conducted under a written protocol pursuant to RCW 26.44.180 and a law enforcement agency or prosecuting attorney has determined that a longer investigation period is necessary. At the completion of the investigation, the department shall make a finding that the report of child abuse or neglect is founded or unfounded.

- (b) If a court in a civil or criminal proceeding, considering the same facts or circumstances as are contained in the report being investigated by the department, makes a judicial finding by a preponderance of the evidence or higher that the subject of the pending investigation has abused or neglected the child, the department shall adopt the finding in its investigation.
- (13) For reports of alleged abuse or neglect that are responded to through family assessment response, the department shall:
 - (a) Provide the family with a written explanation of the procedure for assessment of the child and the family and its purposes;
 - (b) Collaborate with the family to identify family strengths, resources, and service needs, and develop a service plan with the goal of reducing risk of harm to the child and improving or restoring family well-being;
 - (c) Complete the family assessment response within forty-five days of receiving the report; however, upon parental agreement, the family assessment response period may be extended up to ninety days;
 - (d) Offer services to the family in a manner that makes it clear that acceptance of the services is voluntary;
 - (e) Implement the family assessment response in a consistent and cooperative manner;
 - (f) Have the parent or guardian sign an agreement to participate in services before services are initiated that informs the parents of their rights under family assessment response, all of their options, and the options the department has if the parents do not sign the consent form.
 - (14)(a) In conducting an investigation or family assessment of alleged abuse or neglect, the department or law enforcement agency:
 - (i) May interview children. If the department determines that the response to the allegation will be family assessment response, the preferred practice is to request a parent's, guardian's, or custodian's permission to interview the child before conducting the child interview

unless doing so would compromise the safety of the child or the integrity of the assessment. The interviews may be conducted on school premises, at day-care facilities, at the child's home, or at other suitable locations outside of the presence of parents. allegation is investigated, parental notification of the interview must occur at the earliest possible point in the investigation that will not jeopardize the safety or protection of the child or the course of the investigation. Prior to commencing the interview the department or law enforcement agency shall determine whether the child wishes a third party to be present for the interview and, if so, shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the child's wishes. Unless the child objects, the department or law enforcement agency shall make reasonable efforts to include a third party in any interview so long as the presence of the third party will not jeopardize the course of the investigation; and

(ii) Shall have access to all relevant records of the child in the possession of mandated reporters and their employees.

- (b) The Washington state school directors' association shall adopt a model policy addressing protocols when an interview, as authorized by this subsection, is conducted on school premises. In formulating its policy, the association shall consult with the department and the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs.
- (15) If a report of alleged abuse or neglect is founded and constitutes the third founded report received by the department within the last twelve months involving the same child or family, the department shall promptly notify the office of the family and children's ombuds of the contents of the report. The department shall also notify the ombuds of the disposition of the report.
- (16) In investigating and responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect, the department may conduct background checks as authorized by state and federal law.
- (17)(a) The department shall maintain investigation records and conduct timely and periodic reviews of all founded cases of abuse and neglect. The department shall maintain a log of screened-out nonabusive cases.
- (b) In the family assessment response, the department shall not make a finding as to whether child abuse or neglect occurred. No one

p. 13 SB 6295

shall be named as a perpetrator and no investigative finding shall be entered in the department's child abuse or neglect database.

- (18) The department shall use a risk assessment process when investigating alleged child abuse and neglect referrals. The department shall present the risk factors at all hearings in which the placement of a dependent child is an issue. Substance abuse must be a risk factor.
- (19) Upon receipt of a report of alleged abuse or neglect the law enforcement agency may arrange to interview the person making the report and any collateral sources to determine if any malice is involved in the reporting.
- (20) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect involving a child under the court's jurisdiction under chapter 13.34 RCW, the department shall promptly notify the child's guardian ad litem of the report's contents. The department shall also notify the guardian ad litem of the disposition of the report. For purposes of this subsection, "guardian ad litem" has the meaning provided in RCW 13.34.030.

--- END ---