

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS
FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

LS 6776

BILL NUMBER: HB 1257

NOTE PREPARED: Feb 16, 2026

BILL AMENDED: Feb 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Child Services Matters.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. McGuire

FIRST SPONSOR: Sen. Donato

BILL STATUS: 2nd Reading - 2nd House

FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State

Summary of Legislation: *Statewide Child Fatality Review Committee* - The bill adds four members to the Statewide Child Fatality Review Committee, one of whom is appointed by each of the following: (1) The Speaker of the House of Representatives. (2) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate. (3) the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. (4) The Minority Leader of the Senate.

Postadoption Contact Privileges - The bill provides that a court may grant postadoption contact privileges to the birth parent of a child if the child is at least one year of age (rather than two years of age, under current law).

DCS - The bill adds information that must be included in the annual report of the Department of Child Services (DCS) concerning child fatalities or near fatalities in Indiana that are the result of child abuse or neglect. It also provides that the obligation of the DCS to conduct a detailed assessment of a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect does not apply if the report is screened out and referred to a law enforcement agency.

Disclosure of Information - The bill requires the DCS to promptly disclose to the public certain information regarding child fatalities or near fatalities. It also allows the DCS, upon request, to provide additional information regarding cases of child fatalities or near fatalities subject to certain requirements.

The bill also provides that the DCS: (1) shall disclose information regarding reported child abuse or neglect to a member of the United States Congress representing Indiana or a member of the Indiana General Assembly (state legislator) upon request of the state legislator; (2) may release information to the news media to confirm, clarify, correct, or supplement information concerning reported child abuse or neglect that has been made public by a source other than the Department; and (3) shall, as requested by the news media, report to the news media specified information regarding the death of a child whose death is suspected to be the result of child abuse or neglect. It provides that if the information disclosed or released by the DCS includes a record that is redacted to exclude specified information, the record is not confidential.

The bill provides that the DCS may provide unredacted reports or material to: (1) a service provider that

requires access to the unredacted reports or material to assess whether the service provider's services are suitable for the child; and (2) the Attorney General or a prosecutor for purposes of a criminal investigation by the attorney general or prosecutor.

Statutory Limits - The bill provides that the statutory limit on the DCS's provision of services to a parent, guardian, or custodian of a child who is the subject of a petition alleging the child to be a child in need of services (CHINS) applies: (1) regardless of whether the child has been removed from the home of the parent, guardian, or custodian; (2) regardless of whether the services are provided at the direction of a court or at the direction of the department; and (3) beginning on the date on which the CHINS petition is filed.

Effective Date: July 1, 2026.

Explanation of State Expenditures: This bill could increase the workload of the DCS to (1) provide both redacted and non-redacted information concerning allegations of and/or substantiated instances of child abuse or neglect and (2) include specified information in the agency's annual report. Increases in workload are expected to be accomplished within existing resource and funding levels.

The bill will also increase state expenditures for additional mileage reimbursement by adding four members to the Statewide Child Fatality Review Committee. Increases in state expenditures are expected to be minimal.

Additional Information: To date for CY 2025, the DCS has received approximately 12,000 monthly reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in the state, with approximately 2,000 of these reports were substantiated and 10,000 were unsubstantiated each month.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures:

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: DCS.

Local Agencies Affected:

Information Sources:

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