

BILL NUMBER:

SPONSOR(S):

TITLE OF BILL: An Act to amend the Social Services law and the Public Health law, in relation to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or maltreatment

PURPOSE:

Increases the number of professionals and individuals who are considered by the state to be mandatory reporters of child abuse or maltreatment.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS:

Section 1: Amends section 413 of social service law to include college coaches, athletic directors, professors, graduate assistants, college administrators and college presidents and paid staff members of children's camps, summer day camps and travel camps to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse and maltreatment.

Section 2: amends section 1392 of the public health law to include any indoor or outdoor activities involving one or more non-passive recreational activities or educational programs or activities.

JUSTIFICATION:

The reports of alleged child abuse by Penn State's assistant football coach and seeming indifference and inaction from the school's administration are horrifying. Given that many colleges and universities offer athletic and academic programs to children, we need to make sure that a situation like what occurred at Penn State does not happen in New York. The message of this bill is clear: if you're a college coach or college professional and you see or receive a report of child abuse, it is your responsibility and obligation to report it to law enforcement immediately. Children and parents need to know that they will be protected and reports of abuse will be investigated and not brushed aside.

While it is unimaginable that this legislation is necessary, the alleged actions of a deviant sexual predator and those who did little to stop him opens our eyes to how necessary mandatory reporting of child abuse is, especially in immensely powerful organizations. Similar to the actions of the Penn State officials, if you witness child abuse and do not feel compelled to alert authorities you might fail a moral test, but as the law is currently written in New York State you may not be held accountable legally. There is no doubt that we must expand the child abuse reporting requirement as soon as possible.

Current law does not specify that faculty of colleges and universities are mandated reporters. This bill would establish that those involved in higher education and the possibility of coming in contact with children, should be considered mandatory reporters and adhere to the responsibilities of mandatory reporters as it is stated in law.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

New Bill

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

None to the State.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

Immediately.