

Committee Substitute for  
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 758

An act relating to child protective investigations; amending s. 39.202, F.S.; providing staff of a children's advocacy center with access to records of child abuse and neglect; amending s. 39.301, F.S.; prohibiting the use of information contained in reports of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect for purposes that adversely affect the interests of persons who are not identified as responsible for such abuse, abandonment, or neglect; amending s. 39.302, F.S.; prohibiting the use of information contained in reports of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect in institutional investigations for purposes that adversely affect the interests of persons not identified as responsible; providing circumstances under which the Department of Children and Family Services may rely on such information in a decision to renew or revoke a license; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (q) is added to subsection (2) of section 39.202, Florida Statutes, to read:

39.202 Confidentiality of reports and records in cases of child abuse or neglect.—

(2) Except as provided in subsection (4), access to such records, excluding the name of the reporter which shall be released only as provided in subsection (5), shall be granted only to the following persons, officials, and agencies:

(q) Staff of a children's advocacy center that is established and operated under s. 39.3035.

Section 2. Subsection (22) is added to section 39.301, Florida Statutes, to read:

39.301 Initiation of protective investigations.—

(22) When an investigation is closed and a person is not identified as a caregiver responsible for the abuse, neglect, or abandonment alleged in the report, the fact that the person is named in some capacity in the report may not be used in any way to adversely affect the interests of that person. This prohibition applies to any use of the information in employment screening, licensing, child placement, adoption, or any other decisions by a private adoption agency or a state agency or its contracted providers.

Section 3. Subsection (7) is added to section 39.302, Florida Statutes, to read:

39.302 Protective investigations of institutional child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.—

(7) When an investigation of institutional abuse, neglect, or abandonment is closed and a person is not identified as a caregiver responsible for the abuse, neglect, or abandonment alleged in the report, the fact that the person is named in some capacity in the report may not be used in any way to adversely affect the interests of that person. This prohibition applies to any use of the information in employment screening, licensing, child placement, adoption, or any other decisions by a private adoption agency or a state agency or its contracted providers. If such a person is a licensee of the department and is named in any capacity in three or more reports within a 5-year period, the department may review those reports and determine whether the information contained in the reports is relevant for purposes of determining whether the person's license should be renewed or revoked. If the information is relevant to the decision to renew or revoke the license, the department may rely on the information contained in the report in making that decision.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 10, 2005.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 10, 2005.