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CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

House Bill 4662

Sponsor: Rep. Lauren Hager

Committee: Family and Children Services

Complete to 10-25-99

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4662 AS INTRODUCED 5-11-99

Under the Child Protection Law, a school or other institution is required to cooperate with the Family Independence Agency during a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. This cooperation includes allowing access to the child without parental consent if necessary to complete the investigation or to protect the child. However, the law requires that the department notify the person responsible for the child at the time of the contact with the child, or as soon afterward as possible. This notice may be delayed, but only under certain circumstances (if such notice would endanger the child or his or her siblings, or if it would compromise the investigation). Further, the law sets out a process that requires the department to review the procedure for an investigation with school staff.

House Bill 4662 would amend the Child Protection Law to require school officials to also cooperate with law enforcement officials, including allowing access to the child without parental consent if necessary, and under the same circumstances described above. The bill would also extend to law enforcement officials the same requirements and procedures that currently apply to FIA officials, with regard to an investigation of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, where there is contact with a child in a school.

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