

**4First Regular Session  
Sixty-ninth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**INTRODUCED**

LLS NO. 13-0845.03 Debbie Haskins x2045

**HOUSE BILL 13-1271**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101     **CONCERNING METHODS TO RESPOND TO INITIAL CONTACTS MADE TO**  
102             **A CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM, AND, IN**  
103             **CONNECTION THEREWITH, AUTHORIZING THE STATE BOARD OF**  
104             **HUMAN SERVICES TO ADOPT RULES GOVERNING THE HOTLINE**  
105             **SYSTEM AND PROVIDING CONSISTENT PRACTICES IN RESPONSE**  
106             **TO CONTACTS AND TO REPORTS OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED CHILD**  
107             **ABUSE OR NEGLECT.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at*

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

*[http://www.leg.state.co.us/bills/summaries.](http://www.leg.state.co.us/bills/summaries/)*)

The bill authorizes the creation of a child abuse reporting hotline system (hotline system) that provides a uniform method of contact that directly, immediately, and efficiently routes the person to the applicable entity responsible for accepting a report about possible child abuse or neglect and that is advertised to the public as a place for reporting known or suspected child abuse or neglect (report) or for making a request for information or services (an inquiry). The hotline system will be developed through a statewide child abuse hotline steering committee (steering committee) that includes state, county, and comprehensive and appropriate stakeholder representation.

The bill declares that the purpose of the hotline system is to enhance the current child welfare system and to provide an additional option for the public to make an initial report or inquiry. The bill further states that a county department of social services (county department) will retain screening responsibilities, unless the board of county commissioners of that county has approved the use of the hotline system on behalf of the county and such arrangement has been approved by the executive director of the state department of human services (state department).

The purpose of the steering committee is to develop an implementation plan for the hotline system to be advertised to the public and to make recommendations for rules relating to the hotline system and providing consistent practices in response to reports and inquiries. The steering committee shall submit a report no later than July 1, 2014, containing its recommendations to the executive director of the state department, who shall provide the report to the state board of human services (state board).

The hotline system will provide some method of contact to the public that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hotline system shall be operational and publicized to the public statewide no later than January 1, 2015.

With the express written consent of the board of county commissioners, a county department may request that the state department assist that county department with taking reports of possible child abuse and neglect and inquiries from the public. The executive director must approve of this arrangement in writing.

The state board is given rule-making authority to adopt rules, based upon the recommendations of the steering committee, governing the following:

- ! The type of technology that may be used by the hotline system for directly routing initial contacts from the hotline system to the applicable entity responsible for taking a report or responding to an inquiry, including but not limited

to a single statewide toll-free telephone number, with flexibility to adapt the methods to changing and emerging technologies as appropriate;

- ! The operation of the hotline system, including the central record-keeping and tracking of reports and inquiries statewide, and a requirement that record-keeping and tracking of reports and inquiries be accessible to all counties;
- ! Standards and steps for information and referral (instances where there is no report of abuse or neglect but the person contacting the county department or the hotline system is making an inquiry);
- ! How an initial contact to the hotline system is directly routed to the applicable entity responsible for taking a report or responding to an inquiry;
- ! A formal process for a county department to opt to have the state department receive reports or inquiries on behalf of the county department after hours subject to a requirement that the board of county commissioners must officially approve the use of the hotline system on behalf of the county and that the arrangement must be approved by the executive director;
- ! A process for a county department to opt to have another county department receive reports or inquiries on behalf of the county department after hours or on a short-term basis with notification of such arrangement to the executive director;
- ! Standardized training and certification standards for all staff prior to receiving reports and inquiries;
- ! A consistent screening process with criteria and steps for the county department to respond to a report or inquiry;
- ! A consistent decision-making process with criteria and steps for a county department to follow when deciding how to act on a report or inquiry and when to take no action on a report or inquiry.

The state department is directed to report about the hotline system and the adoption of rules as part of the state department's annual SMART act presentations to the general assembly.

This bill makes conforming amendments to the statutes concerning reports made by the public or by a mandatory reporter to allow a report to be made through the hotline system when the county commissioners have given prior approval for the report to be filed through the hotline system and the executive director of the state department has approved such an arrangement.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2           **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 26-5-111 as  
3 follows:

4           **26-5-111. Statewide child abuse reporting hotline system -**  
5 **legislative declaration - definitions - child abuse hotline steering**  
6 **committee - rules on consistent processes in response to reports and**  
7 **inquiries for information.** (1) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY  
8 FINDS, DETERMINES, AND DECLARES THAT THE PURPOSE OF ENACTING THIS  
9 SECTION IS TO:

10           (I) CREATE, BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF A STEERING  
11 COMMITTEE WITH BROAD REPRESENTATION, A STATEWIDE CHILD ABUSE  
12 REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM TO SERVE AS A DIRECT, IMMEDIATE, AND  
13 EFFICIENT ROUTE TO THE APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR  
14 ACCEPTING THE REPORT AND TO THE APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR  
15 RESPONDING TO AN INQUIRY AND THAT IS AVAILABLE TWENTY-FOUR  
16 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK; AND

17           (II) AUTHORIZE RULE-MAKING BY THE STATE BOARD TO ENSURE  
18 THAT THERE ARE STANDARDS FOR THE CONSISTENT SCREENING,  
19 ASSESSMENT, AND DECISION-MAKING IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF KNOWN  
20 OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND TO INQUIRIES MADE TO A  
21 COUNTY DEPARTMENT OR TO THE HOTLINE SYSTEM.

22           (b) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT THE HOTLINE  
23 SYSTEM TO BE DEVELOPED AS OUTLINED IN THIS SECTION ENHANCES THE  
24 CURRENT CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM. THE HOTLINE SYSTEM IS INTENDED TO  
25 PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL OPTION FOR THE PUBLIC TO MAKE AN INITIAL  
26 REPORT OF SUSPECTED OR KNOWN CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT OR MAKING

1 AN INQUIRY. THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT WILL RETAIN SCREENING  
2 RESPONSIBILITIES, UNLESS THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
3 COUNTY DEPARTMENT HAS APPROVED THE USE OF THE HOTLINE SYSTEM  
4 ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY AND SUCH ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN  
5 APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

6 (2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
7 REQUIRES:

8 (a) "CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM" OR "THE HOTLINE  
9 SYSTEM" MEANS THE UNIFORM METHOD OF CONTACT THAT DIRECTLY,  
10 IMMEDIATELY, AND EFFICIENTLY ROUTES THE PERSON TO THE APPLICABLE  
11 ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCEPTING A REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION  
12 19-3-307, C.R.S., OR TO THE APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR  
13 RESPONDING TO AN INQUIRY AND THAT IS ADVERTISED TO THE PUBLIC AS  
14 A PLACE FOR REPORTING KNOWN OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT  
15 OR FOR MAKING INQUIRIES.

16 (b) "INFORMATION AND REFERRAL" MEANS AN INITIAL CONTACT  
17 FROM THE PUBLIC WHICH DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A REPORT OF ABUSE OR  
18 NEGLECT BUT IS AN INQUIRY AND THE RESPONSE TO THE INQUIRY, AS  
19 DEFINED IN RULE.

20 (c) "INQUIRY" MEANS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR FOR  
21 SPECIFIC SERVICES.

22 (d) "MANDATORY REPORTER" MEANS A PERSON WHO IS REQUIRED  
23 TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-3-304,  
24 C.R.S.

25 (e) "REPORT" MEANS AN INITIAL REPORT OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED  
26 CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT.

27 (3) (a) THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP A CHILD ABUSE

1 HOTLINE STEERING COMMITTEE, INCLUDING STATE, COUNTY, AND  
2 COMPREHENSIVE AND APPROPRIATE STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION. THE  
3 STEERING COMMITTEE IS EXPECTED TO DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION  
4 PLAN FOR A STATEWIDE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM, WHICH  
5 IS ADVERTISED TO THE PUBLIC AND TO MANDATORY REPORTERS, AND TO  
6 MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RULES RELATING TO THE OPERATION OF  
7 THE HOTLINE SYSTEM AND RELATING TO CONSISTENT PRACTICES FOR  
8 RESPONDING TO REPORTS AND INQUIRIES. THE PURPOSE OF THE HOTLINE  
9 SYSTEM IS TO PROVIDE A DIRECT, IMMEDIATE, AND EFFICIENT ROUTE TO  
10 THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCEPTING A REPORT PURSUANT TO  
11 SECTION 19-3-307, C.R.S. THE PUBLIC MAY ALSO CONTACT THE HOTLINE  
12 SYSTEM FOR INQUIRIES. THE HOTLINE SYSTEM MUST OPERATE  
13 TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. THE HOTLINE MAY  
14 CONSIST OF MULTIPLE METHODS OF COMMUNICATION, AS PRESCRIBED BY  
15 RULES OF THE STATE BOARD. THE STEERING COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A  
16 REPORT NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2014, CONTAINING ITS  
17 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WHO SHALL PROVIDE  
18 THE REPORT TO THE STATE BOARD. THE HOTLINE SYSTEM SHALL BE  
19 OPERATIONAL AND PUBLICIZED STATEWIDE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1,  
20 2015.

21 (b) WITH THE EXPRESS WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE BOARD OF  
22 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF A COUNTY, A COUNTY DEPARTMENT MAY  
23 REQUEST THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT ASSIST THAT COUNTY WITH THE  
24 TAKING OF CALLS OR INITIAL CONTACTS FROM THE PUBLIC OF REPORTS OF  
25 POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT OR OF INQUIRIES. THE EXECUTIVE  
26 DIRECTOR OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT MUST APPROVE THIS  
27 ARRANGEMENT IN WRITING.

1 (c) BASED UPON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILD ABUSE  
2 HOTLINE STEERING COMMITTEE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
3 ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM.

4 (4) THE STATE BOARD IS AUTHORIZED TO ADOPT RULES, BASED  
5 UPON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE STEERING  
6 COMMITTEE, AND MAY REVISE RULES, AS NECESSARY, INCLUDING BUT NOT  
7 LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

8 (a) THE TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY THAT MAY BE USED BY THE HOTLINE  
9 SYSTEM FOR DIRECTLY ROUTING INITIAL CONTACTS FROM THE HOTLINE  
10 SYSTEM TO THE APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCEPTING  
11 REPORTS PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-3-307, C.R.S., OR TO THE APPLICABLE  
12 ENTITY TO RESPOND TO AN INQUIRY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A  
13 SINGLE STATEWIDE TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER, WITH FLEXIBILITY TO  
14 ADAPT THE METHODS TO CHANGING AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AS  
15 APPROPRIATE;

16 (b) THE OPERATION OF THE HOTLINE SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE  
17 CENTRAL RECORD-KEEPING AND TRACKING OF REPORTS AND INQUIRIES  
18 STATEWIDE, AND A REQUIREMENT THAT THE RECORD-KEEPING AND  
19 TRACKING OF REPORTS AND INQUIRIES BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COUNTIES  
20 THROUGH THE STATE'S CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM;

21 (c) RULES GOVERNING THE STANDARDS AND STEPS FOR  
22 INFORMATION AND REFERRAL AND HOW AN INQUIRY IS ROUTED TO THE  
23 APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPONDING TO AN INQUIRY;

24 (d) HOW AN INITIAL REPORT TO THE HOTLINE SYSTEM IS DIRECTLY  
25 ROUTED TO THE APPLICABLE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCEPTING A  
26 REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-3-307, C.R.S.;

27 (e) A FORMAL PROCESS FOR A COUNTY DEPARTMENT TO OPT TO

1 HAVE THE STATE DEPARTMENT RECEIVE REPORTS OR INQUIRIES ON BEHALF  
2 OF THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT AFTER HOURS SUBJECT TO A REQUIREMENT  
3 THAT THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MUST OFFICIALLY APPROVE  
4 THE USE OF THE HOTLINE SYSTEM ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY AND SUCH  
5 ARRANGEMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR;

6 (f) A PROCESS FOR A COUNTY DEPARTMENT TO OPT TO HAVE  
7 ANOTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENT RECEIVE REPORTS OR INQUIRIES ON  
8 BEHALF OF THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT AFTER HOURS OR ON A SHORT-TERM  
9 BASIS WITH NOTIFICATION OF SUCH ARRANGEMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE  
10 DIRECTOR;

11 (g) STANDARDIZED TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR  
12 ALL STAFF PRIOR TO TAKING REPORTS AND INQUIRIES;

13 (h) A CONSISTENT SCREENING PROCESS WITH CRITERIA AND STEPS  
14 FOR THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT TO FOLLOW IN RESPONDING TO A REPORT  
15 OR INQUIRY; AND

16 (i) RULES ESTABLISHING A CONSISTENT DECISION-MAKING  
17 PROCESS WITH CRITERIA AND STEPS FOR THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT TO  
18 FOLLOW WHEN DECIDING HOW TO ACT ON A REPORT OR INQUIRY OR WHEN  
19 TO TAKE NO ACTION ON A REPORT OR INQUIRY.

20 (5) AS PART OF THE DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS CONDUCTED  
21 PURSUANT TO SECTION 2-7-203, C.R.S., THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
22 MAKE ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE APPLICABLE COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE  
23 REGARDING THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S REGULATORY AGENDA AND RULES  
24 PERTAINING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OR OPERATION OF THE HOTLINE  
25 SYSTEM, THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE HOTLINE SYSTEM, THE  
26 OUTCOMES FROM THE OPERATION OF THE HOTLINE SYSTEM, AND THE  
27 OUTCOMES FROM THE ADOPTION OF RULES AND PRACTICES FOR



1 CONSISTENT SCREENING, ASSESSMENT, AND DECISION-MAKING FOR  
2 REPORTS OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND FOR  
3 INQUIRIES.

4 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 19-3-304, **amend** (1)  
5 (a), (3), and (3.5) as follows:

6 **19-3-304. Persons required to report child abuse or neglect.**

7 (1) (a) Except as otherwise provided by section 19-3-307, sections  
8 25-1-122 (4) (d) and 25-4-1404 (1) (d), C.R.S., and paragraph (b) of this  
9 subsection (1), any person specified in subsection (2) of this section who  
10 has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected  
11 to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to  
12 circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or  
13 neglect shall immediately upon receiving such information report or cause  
14 a report to be made of such fact to the county department, ~~or~~ THE local  
15 law enforcement agency, OR THROUGH THE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING  
16 HOTLINE SYSTEM AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 26-5-111, C.R.S.

17 (3) In addition to those persons specifically required by this  
18 section to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect and  
19 circumstances or conditions which might reasonably result in abuse or  
20 neglect, any other person may report known or suspected child abuse or  
21 neglect and circumstances or conditions which might reasonably result in  
22 child abuse or neglect to the local law enforcement agency, ~~or~~ the county  
23 department, OR THROUGH THE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM  
24 AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 26-5-111, C.R.S.

25 (3.5) No person, including a person specified in subsection (1) of  
26 this section, shall knowingly make a false report of abuse or neglect to a  
27 county department, ~~or~~ A local law enforcement agency, OR THROUGH THE

1 CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM AS SET FORTH IN SECTION  
2 26-5-111, C.R.S.

3 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 19-3-307, **amend** (1)  
4 as follows:

5 **19-3-307. Reporting procedures.** (1) Reports of known or  
6 suspected child abuse or neglect made pursuant to this article shall be  
7 made immediately to the county department, ~~or~~ the local law enforcement  
8 agency, OR THROUGH THE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HOTLINE SYSTEM AS  
9 SET FORTH IN SECTION 26-5-111, C.R.S., and shall be followed promptly  
10 by a written report prepared by those persons required to report. The  
11 county department shall submit a report of confirmed child abuse or  
12 neglect within sixty days of receipt of the report to the state department  
13 in a manner prescribed by the state department.

14 **SECTION 4. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,  
15 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
16 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.