

SENATE BILL NO. 187

INTRODUCED BY R. WEBB

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING THAT A PERSON WHO COMMITS CERTAIN OFFENSES WITHIN THE VISION OR HEARING OF A CHILD WHO IS LESS THAN 14 YEARS OF AGE MAY ALSO BE PROSECUTED FOR ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN; AMENDING SECTION 45-5-622, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 45-5-622, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-5-622. Endangering welfare of children. (1) A parent, guardian, or other person supervising the welfare of a child less than 18 years old commits the offense of endangering the welfare of children if the parent, guardian, or other person knowingly endangers the child's welfare by violating a duty of care, protection, or support.

(2) Except as provided in 16-6-305, a parent or guardian or any person who is 18 years of age or older, whether or not the parent, guardian, or other person is supervising the welfare of the child, commits the offense of endangering the welfare of children if the parent, guardian, or other person knowingly contributes to the delinquency of a child less than:

- (a) 18 years old by:
 - (i) supplying or encouraging the use of an intoxicating substance by the child; or
 - (ii) assisting, promoting, or encouraging the child to enter a place of prostitution; or

- (b) 16 years old by assisting, promoting, or encouraging the child to:
 - (i) abandon the child's place of residence without the consent of the child's parents or guardian; or
 - (ii) engage in sexual conduct.

(3) A person, whether or not the person is supervising the welfare of a child less than 18 years of age, commits the offense of endangering the welfare of children if the person, in the residence of a child, in a building, structure, conveyance, or outdoor location where a child might reasonably be expected to be present, in a room offered to the public for overnight accommodation, or in any multiple-unit residential building, knowingly:

- (a) produces or manufactures methamphetamine or attempts to produce or manufacture

1 methamphetamine;

2 (b) possesses any material, compound, mixture, or preparation that contains any combination of the
3 items listed in 45-9-107 with intent to manufacture methamphetamine; or

4 (c) causes or permits a child to inhale, be exposed to, have contact with, or ingest methamphetamine
5 or be exposed to or have contact with methamphetamine paraphernalia.

6 (4) (a) A person, whether or not the person is supervising the welfare of a child less than 18 years of age,
7 commits the offense of endangering the welfare of children if the person purposely or knowingly commits any of
8 the offenses listed in 45-5-202, 45-5-206, or 45-5-213 within the vision or hearing of a child less than 14 years
9 of age. A charge under this section may be brought in addition to a charge under 45-5-202, 45-5-206, or
10 45-5-213, and a conviction under 45-5-202, 45-5-206, or 45-5-213 is not required for a conviction under this
11 section.

12 (b) If an offense listed in 45-5-202, 45-5-206, or 45-5-213 was committed within the vision or hearing of
13 more than one child, a person may be charged with a separate violation of this section for each child who was
14 within vision or hearing of the offense when it occurred.

15 ~~(4)~~(5) A parent, guardian, or other person supervising the welfare of a child less than 16 years of age
16 may verbally or in writing request a person who is 18 years of age or older and who has no legal right of
17 supervision or control over the child to stop contacting the child if the requester believes that the contact is not
18 in the child's best interests. If the person continues to contact the child, the parent, guardian, or other person
19 supervising the welfare of the child may petition or the county attorney may upon the person's request petition
20 for an order of protection under Title 40, chapter 15. To the extent that they are consistent with this subsection,
21 the provisions of Title 40, chapter 15, apply. A person who purposely or knowingly violates an order of protection
22 commits the offense of endangering the welfare of children and upon conviction shall be sentenced as provided
23 in subsection ~~(5)~~ (6)(a).

24 ~~(5)~~(6) (a) Except as provided in subsection ~~(5)~~(6)(b), a person convicted of endangering the welfare
25 of children shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$500 or be imprisoned in the county jail for any term not to
26 exceed 6 months, or both. A person convicted of a second offense of endangering the welfare of children shall
27 be fined an amount not to exceed \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for any term not to exceed 6 months,
28 or both.

29 (b) A person convicted under subsection (3) is guilty of a felony and shall be imprisoned in the state
30 prison for a term not to exceed 5 years and may be fined an amount not to exceed \$10,000, or both. If a child

1 suffers serious bodily injury, the offender shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$25,000 or be imprisoned for
2 a term not to exceed 10 years, or both. Prosecution or conviction of a violation of subsection (3) does not bar
3 prosecution or conviction for any other crime committed by the offender as part of the same conduct.

4 ~~(6)(7)~~ On the issue of whether there has been a violation of the duty of care, protection, and support, the
5 following, in addition to all other admissible evidence, is admissible: cruel treatment; abuse; infliction of
6 unnecessary and cruel punishment; abandonment; neglect; lack of proper medical care, clothing, shelter, and
7 food; and evidence of past bodily injury.

8 ~~(7)(8)~~ The court may order, in its discretion, any fine levied or any bond forfeited upon a charge of
9 endangering the welfare of children paid to or for the benefit of the person or persons whose welfare the
10 defendant has endangered."

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12 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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