

SENATE BILL 1403

By Bell

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37,
relative to child abuse.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-5-124(a), is amended by adding the following language to the end of the subsection:

The district attorney for the judicial district in which the child was located must also receive a copy of the report provided to the legislators.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-1-406, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection (b) and redesignating the current subsection (b) and subsequent subsections accordingly:

(b) If the department receives a report of child abuse from a person who is tasked with either the education or health and welfare of the child who is the subject of the report and the report indicates that the child is currently at risk of further harm, the department must commence a local investigation immediately, regardless of the time of day or night, by making physical contact with the child, in order to give the greatest protection possible to the child's physical safety. Upon making contact with the child, the investigator shall:

- (1) Physically assess the child and document any injuries, old or new;
- (2) Assess the child's level of safety, specifically inquiring about whether the alleged perpetrator will have access to the child after the initial interview;
- (3) Develop and implement a safety plan with the child, unless the child is unable to participate due to the child's age;

(4) Determine whether the child, the child's siblings, or the current alleged perpetrator have a history of interactions with the department;

(5) Communicate to local law enforcement and the juvenile court judge with jurisdiction over the child within twenty-four (24) hours of the commencement of the investigation; and

(6) Present the results of the immediate investigation to the child protective investigation team.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.