

CCS HCS SCS SB 256 -- CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This bill changes the laws regarding child abuse and neglect.

TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN (Section 160.2100, RSMo)

The bill repeals the expiration date of January 1, 2013, of the provisions regarding the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children and requires, beginning January 1, 2014, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the task force, to report annually to the General Assembly on the department's progress in preventing child sexual abuse.

SAFE PLACE FOR NEWBORNS ACT (Sections 210.950 and 211.447 and Section 1)

The bill changes the laws regarding the Safe Place for Newborns Act of 2002. Currently, a parent will not be prosecuted for the abandonment of a child up to five days old if he or she leaves the child in the custody of an employee, agent, or staff member of any hospital in a health care provider position or on duty in a volunteer position; a firefighter; emergency medical technician; or a law enforcement officer. The bill increases the age of a child to 45 days after birth and includes an employee, agent, or staff member of any maternity home or pregnancy resource center in a health care provider position or on duty in a volunteer position.

A parent voluntarily relinquishing a child cannot be required to release any identifying information about the child or parent. An officer, employee, or agent of this state or any political subdivision cannot attempt to locate or determine the identity of a parent or disclose identifying information except in certain cases.

It is an affirmative defense to prosecution for the abandonment or endangerment of the welfare of a child if the defendant voluntarily relinquished a child no more than one year of age.

A school district or charter school is allowed to annually provide high school students enrolled in health education at least 30 minutes of age and grade appropriate classroom instruction relative to the Safe Place for Newborns Act of 2002. The information must include an explanation that relinquishment means to give over possession of a child with the intent to give up all parental responsibility, the process and general locations for relinquishing a child, options for a parent who is unable to travel to a designated facility, and the process for reclaiming parental rights.

FORENSIC EXAMINATIONS IN CHILD ABUSE CASES (Section 595.220)

The Department of Public Safety must establish rules for reimbursing the costs of forensic examinations for children younger than 14 years of age, including establishing conditions and definitions for emergency and non-emergency forensic examinations and may, by rule, establish additional qualifications for appropriate medical providers performing non-emergency forensic examinations for children younger than 14 years of age. The department must provide reimbursement regardless of whether or not the findings indicate that the child was abused.