Session of 2025

SENATE BILL No. 145

By Senator Shane

2-3

AN ACT concerning children and minors; relating to law enforcement agencies and the secretary for children and families; requiring that the secretary immediately notify law enforcement agencies of reports of abuse or neglect; providing for law enforcement agencies to request resources from the secretary for children and families for investigations; amending K.S.A. 2024 Supp. 38-2226 and repealing the existing section.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. K.S.A. 2024 Supp. 38-2226 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2226. (a) *Investigation for child abuse or neglect.* The secretary and law enforcement officers shall have the duty to receive and investigate reports of child abuse or neglect for the purpose of determining whether the report is valid and whether action is required to protect a child. Any person or agency which maintains records relating to the involved child which are relevant to any investigation conducted by the secretary or law enforcement agency under this code shall provide the secretary or law enforcement agency with the necessary records to assist in investigations. In order to provide such records, the person or agency maintaining the records shall receive from the secretary or law enforcement: (1) A written request for information; and (2) a written notice that the investigation is being conducted by the secretary or law enforcement. If the secretary and such officers determine that no action is necessary to protect the child but that a criminal prosecution should be considered, such law enforcement officers shall make a report of the case to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(b) *Joint investigations. Upon assignment by the secretary for investigation, the secretary shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction of the location of where the alleged abuse or neglect occurred or the residence of the child who is the subject of the report so that such law enforcement agency may investigate whether a crime occurred.* When a report of child abuse or neglect indicates: (1) That there is serious physical harm to, serious deterioration of or sexual abuse of the child; and (2) that action may be required to protect the child, the investigation shall be conducted as a joint effort between the secretary and the appropriate law enforcement agency or agencies, with a free exchange

of information between them pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2210, and amendments thereto. If a statement of a suspect is obtained by either agency, a copy of the statement shall be provided to the other. *Upon the request of an investigating law enforcement agency, the secretary for children and families shall share resources related to investigating reports of abuse or neglect to facilitate a joint investigation or an investigation of a potential crime being conducted by such law enforcement agency.*

(c) *Investigation of certain cases.* Suspected child abuse or neglect which occurs in an institution operated by the Kansas department of corrections shall be investigated by the attorney general or secretary of corrections. Any suspected child abuse or neglect in an institution operated by the Kansas department for aging and disability services, or by persons employed by the Kansas department for aging and disability services or the Kansas department for children and families, or of children of persons employed by either department, shall be investigated by the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(d) *Coordination of investigations by county or district attorney.* If a dispute develops between agencies investigating a reported case of child abuse or neglect, the appropriate county or district attorney shall take charge of, direct and coordinate the investigation.

(e) *Investigations concerning certain facilities.* Any investigation involving a facility subject to licensing or regulation by the secretary of health and environment shall be promptly reported to the state secretary of health and environment.

(f) *Cooperation between agencies.* Law enforcement agencies and the secretary shall assist each other in taking action which is necessary to protect a child regardless of which agency conducted the initial investigation.

(g) *Cooperation between school personnel and investigative agencies.* (1) Educational institutions, the secretary and law enforcement agencies shall cooperate with each other in the investigation of reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. The secretary and law enforcement agencies shall have access to a child in a setting designated by school personnel on the premises of an educational institution. Attendance at an interview conducted on such premises shall be at the discretion of the agency conducting the interview, giving consideration to the best interests of the child. To the extent that safety and practical considerations allow, law enforcement officers on such premises for the purpose of investigating a report of suspected child abuse or neglect shall not be in uniform.

(2) The secretary or a law enforcement officer may request the presence of school personnel during an interview if the secretary or officer determines that the presence of such person might provide comfort to the child or facilitate the investigation.

(h) *Visual observation required.* As part of any investigation conducted pursuant to this section, the secretary or the law enforcement agency, or such agency's designee, that is conducting the investigation shall visually observe the child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect. In the case of a joint investigation conducted pursuant to subsection (b), the secretary and the investigating law enforcement agency, or the designees of the secretary and such agency, shall both visually observe the child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect. All investigation reports shall include the date, time and location of any visual observation of a child that is required by this subsection.

(i) *Child abuse review and evaluation referrals.* (1) Upon investigation by law enforcement or assignment by the secretary of any investigation of physical abuse or physical neglect conducted pursuant to this section that concerns a child five years of age or younger, the secretary, the law enforcement agency or the agency's designee shall make a CARE referral for such child.

(2) In any other investigation of physical abuse, emotional abuse, medical neglect or physical neglect conducted pursuant to this section, the secretary, the law enforcement agency or the agency's designee may make a CARE referral for such child.

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2024 Supp. 38-2226 is hereby repealed.

Sec. 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.