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SENATE BILL NO. 640

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee

on March 13, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Pillion)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3803, 2.2-3815, 63.2-100, 63.2-105, 63.2-203, 63.2-1501, 63.2-1502, 63.2-1503, 63.2-1508, 63.2-1509, 63.2-1512, and 63.2-1530 of the Code of Virginia and Chapter 604 of the Acts of Assembly of 2017; to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 63.2-203.1, 63.2-319.1, and 63.2-1510.1; and to repeal § 63.2-1510 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department of Social Services; corrective action plans and assumption of temporary control of local boards and local departments; centralized hotline for reports or complaints of child abuse or neglect.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-3803, 2.2-3815, 63.2-100, 63.2-105, 63.2-203, 63.2-1501, 63.2-1502, 63.2-1503, 63.2-1508, 63.2-1509, 63.2-1512, and 63.2-1530 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 63.2-203.1, 63.2-319.1, and 63.2-1510.1 as follows:

§ 2.2-3803. Administration of systems including personal information; internet privacy policy; exceptions.

A. Any agency maintaining an information system that includes personal information shall:

1. Collect, maintain, use, and disseminate only that personal information permitted or required by law to be so collected, maintained, used, or disseminated, or necessary to accomplish a proper purpose of the agency;

2. Collect information to the greatest extent feasible from the data subject directly, or through the sharing of data with other agencies, in order to accomplish a proper purpose of the agency;

3. Establish categories for maintaining personal information to operate in conjunction with confidentiality requirements and access controls;

4. Maintain information in the system with accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and pertinence as necessary to ensure fairness in determinations relating to a data subject;

5. Make no dissemination to another system without (i) specifying requirements for security and usage including limitations on access thereto, and (ii) receiving reasonable assurances that those requirements and limitations will be observed. This subdivision shall not apply, however, to a dissemination made by an agency to an agency in another state, district or territory of the United States where the personal information is requested by the agency of such other state, district or territory in connection with the application of the data subject therein for a service, privilege or right under the laws thereof, nor shall this apply to information transmitted to family advocacy representatives of the United States Armed Forces in accordance with subsection N M of § 63.2-1503;

6. Maintain a list of all persons or organizations having regular access to personal information in the information system;

7. Maintain for a period of three years or until such time as the personal information is purged, whichever is shorter, a complete and accurate record, including identity and purpose, of every access to any personal information in a system, including the identity of any persons or organizations not having regular access authority but excluding access by the personnel of the agency wherein data is put to service for the purpose for which it is obtained;

8. Take affirmative action to establish rules of conduct and inform each person involved in the design, development, operation, or maintenance of the system, or the collection or use of any personal information contained therein, about all the requirements of this chapter, the rules and procedures, including penalties for noncompliance, of the agency designed to assure compliance with such requirements;

9. Establish appropriate safeguards to secure the system from any reasonably foreseeable threat to its security; and

10. Collect no personal information concerning the political or religious beliefs, affiliations, and activities of data subjects that is maintained, used, or disseminated in or by any information system operated by any agency unless authorized explicitly by statute or ordinance. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to allow an agency to disseminate to federal government authorities information concerning the religious beliefs and affiliations of data subjects for the purpose of compiling a list, registry, or database of individuals based on religious affiliation, national origin, or ethnicity, unless such dissemination is specifically required by state or federal law.

B. Every public body, as defined in § 2.2-3701, that has an ~~Internet~~ internet website associated with that public body shall develop an ~~Internet~~ internet privacy policy and an ~~Internet~~ internet privacy policy statement that explains the policy to the public. The policy shall be consistent with the requirements of this chapter. The

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60 statement shall be made available on the public body's website in a conspicuous manner. The Secretary of
 61 Administration or his designee shall provide guidelines for developing the policy and the statement, and each
 62 public body shall tailor the policy and the statement to reflect the information practices of the individual
 63 public body. At minimum, the policy and the statement shall address (i) what information, including
 64 personally identifiable information, will be collected, if any; (ii) whether any information will be
 65 automatically collected simply by accessing the website and, if so, what information; (iii) whether the website
 66 automatically places a computer file, commonly referred to as a "cookie," on the ~~Internet~~ internet user's
 67 computer and, if so, for what purpose; and (iv) how the collected information is being used or will be used.

68 C. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A, the Virginia Retirement System may disseminate
 69 information as to the retirement status or benefit eligibility of any employee covered by the Virginia
 70 Retirement System, the Judicial Retirement System, the State Police Officers' Retirement System, or the
 71 Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System, to the chief executive officer or personnel officers of the state or
 72 local agency by which he is employed.

73 D. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A, the Department of Social Services may disseminate
 74 client information to the Department of Taxation for the purposes of providing specified tax information as
 75 set forth in clause (ii) of subsection C of § 58.1-3.

76 E. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
 77 may disseminate student information to agencies acting on behalf or in place of the U.S. government to gain
 78 access to data on wages earned outside the Commonwealth or through federal employment, for the purposes
 79 of complying with § 23.1-204.1.

80 **§ 2.2-3815. Access to social security numbers prohibited; exceptions.**

81 A. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the first five digits of a social security number contained
 82 in a public record shall be confidential and exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act
 83 (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.).

84 For the purposes of this chapter:

85 "Agency" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-3801, unless the context requires otherwise.

86 "Data subject" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-3801.

87 "Public record" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-3701, but shall not include any records
 88 required by law to be maintained by the clerks of the courts of record, as defined in § 1-212, or courts not of
 89 record, as defined in § 16.1-69.5.

90 "Regional agency" means a unit of government organized as provided by law whose members are
 91 appointed by the participating local governing bodies, and such unit includes two or more counties, cities, or
 92 towns.

93 B. The provisions of this section shall not be construed to prevent the release of a social security number:

94 1. In accordance with a proper judicial order;

95 2. To any federal, state or local law-enforcement or correctional personnel, including a law-enforcement
 96 officer, probation officer, parole officer or administrator, or a member of a parole board, seeking information
 97 in the course of his official duties;

98 3. By one agency to another agency in Virginia or to an agency in another state, district, or territory of the
 99 United States where such information is requested by such agencies in connection with (i) the application of
 100 the data subject therein for a service, privilege, or right under the laws thereof, (ii) the transmittal of
 101 information to family advocacy representatives of the United States Armed Forces in accordance with
 102 subsection ~~N~~ M of § 63.2-1503, or (iii) the performance of such agency's official duties;

103 4. To any data subject exercising his rights under § 2.2-3806, or if the data subject is less than 18 years of
 104 age, to his legal guardian or parent, including a noncustodial parent, unless such parent's parental rights have
 105 been terminated or a court of competent jurisdiction has restricted or denied such access;

106 5. To any other agency in Virginia or to a federal agency in order to comply with any applicable law or
 107 regulation; or

108 6. To a person or entity when necessary to administer any program of the agency, to perform a service or
 109 function of the agency, or to conduct or complete the transaction for which the social security number was
 110 submitted to the agency.

111 **§ 63.2-100. Definitions.**

112 As used in this title, unless the context requires a different meaning:

113 "Abused or neglected child" means any child less than 18 years of age:

114 1. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates or inflicts, threatens to create or inflict,
 115 or allows to be created or inflicted upon such child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental
 116 means, or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions,
 117 including, but not limited to, a child who is with his parent or other person responsible for his care either (i)
 118 during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a Schedule I or II controlled substance, or (ii) during the
 119 unlawful sale of such substance by that child's parents or other person responsible for his care, where such
 120 manufacture, or attempted manufacture or unlawful sale would constitute a felony violation of § 18.2-248;

121 2. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care neglects or refuses to provide care necessary for

122 his health. However, no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in
 123 accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that
 124 reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected child. Further, a decision by parents who have legal
 125 authority for the child or, in the absence of parents with legal authority for the child, any person with legal
 126 authority for the child, who refuses a particular medical treatment for a child with a life-threatening condition
 127 shall not be deemed a refusal to provide necessary care if (i) such decision is made jointly by the parents or
 128 other person with legal authority and the child; (ii) the child has reached 14 years of age and is sufficiently
 129 mature to have an informed opinion on the subject of his medical treatment; (iii) the parents or other person
 130 with legal authority and the child have considered alternative treatment options; and (iv) the parents or other
 131 person with legal authority and the child believe in good faith that such decision is in the child's best interest.
 132 No child whose parent or other person responsible for his care allows the child to engage in independent
 133 activities without adult supervision shall for that reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected
 134 child, provided that (a) such independent activities are appropriate based on the child's age, maturity, and
 135 physical and mental abilities and (b) such lack of supervision does not constitute conduct that is so grossly
 136 negligent as to endanger the health or safety of the child. Such independent activities include traveling to or
 137 from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot, playing outdoors, or remaining at home for a
 138 reasonable period of time. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to limit the provisions of
 139 § 16.1-278.4;

140 3. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care abandons such child;

141 4. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care, or an intimate partner of such parent or person,
 142 commits or allows to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation
 143 of the law;

144 5. Who is without parental care or guardianship caused by the unreasonable absence or the mental or
 145 physical incapacity of the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis;

146 6. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates a substantial risk of physical or mental
 147 injury by knowingly leaving the child alone in the same dwelling, including an apartment as defined in
 148 § 55.1-2000, with a person to whom the child is not related by blood or marriage and who the parent or other
 149 person responsible for his care knows has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration
 150 is required as a Tier III offender pursuant to § 9.1-902; or

151 7. Who has been identified as a victim of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking as defined in the
 152 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 et seq., and in the Justice for Victims of
 153 Trafficking Act of 2015, 42 U.S.C. § 5101 et seq.

154 If a civil proceeding under this title is based solely on the parent having left the child at a hospital or
 155 emergency medical services agency, it shall be an affirmative defense that such parent safely delivered the
 156 child within 30 days of the child's birth to (i) a hospital that provides 24-hour emergency services, (ii) an
 157 attended emergency medical services agency that employs emergency medical services providers, or (iii) a
 158 newborn safety device located at and operated by such hospital or emergency medical services agency. For
 159 purposes of terminating parental rights pursuant to § 16.1-283 and placement for adoption, the court may find
 160 such a child is a neglected child upon the ground of abandonment.

161 "Adoptive home" means any family home selected and approved by a parent, local board or a licensed
 162 child-placing agency for the placement of a child with the intent of adoption.

163 "Adoptive placement" means arranging for the care of a child who is in the custody of a child-placing
 164 agency in an approved home for the purpose of adoption.

165 "Adult abuse" means the willful infliction of physical pain, injury or mental anguish or unreasonable
 166 confinement of an adult as defined in § 63.2-1603.

167 "Adult day center" means any facility that is either operated for profit or that desires licensure and that
 168 provides supplementary care and protection during only a part of the day to four or more adults who are aged
 169 or infirm or who have disabilities and who reside elsewhere, except (i) a facility or portion of a facility
 170 licensed by the State Board of Health or the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services,
 171 and (ii) the home or residence of an individual who cares for only persons related to him by blood or
 172 marriage. Included in this definition are any two or more places, establishments or institutions owned,
 173 operated or controlled by a single entity and providing such supplementary care and protection to a combined
 174 total of four or more adults who are aged or infirm or who have disabilities.

175 "Adult exploitation" means the illegal, unauthorized, improper, or fraudulent use of an adult as defined in
 176 § 63.2-1603 or his funds, property, benefits, resources, or other assets for another's profit, benefit, or
 177 advantage, including a caregiver or person serving in a fiduciary capacity, or that deprives the adult of his
 178 rightful use of or access to such funds, property, benefits, resources, or other assets. "Adult exploitation"
 179 includes (i) an intentional breach of a fiduciary obligation to an adult to his detriment or an intentional failure
 180 to use the financial resources of an adult in a manner that results in neglect of such adult; (ii) the acquisition,
 181 possession, or control of an adult's financial resources or property through the use of undue influence,
 182 coercion, or duress; and (iii) forcing or coercing an adult to pay for goods or services or perform services
 183 against his will for another's profit, benefit, or advantage if the adult did not agree, or was tricked, misled, or

184 defrauded into agreeing, to pay for such goods or services or to perform such services.

185 "Adult foster care" means room and board, supervision, and special services to an adult who has a
186 physical or mental condition. Adult foster care may be provided by a single provider for up to three adults.
187 "Adult foster care" does not include services or support provided to individuals through the Fostering Futures
188 program set forth in Article 2 (§ 63.2-917 et seq.) of Chapter 9.

189 "Adult neglect" means that an adult as defined in § 63.2-1603 is living under such circumstances that he is
190 not able to provide for himself or is not being provided services necessary to maintain his physical and
191 mental health and that the failure to receive such necessary services impairs or threatens to impair his
192 well-being. However, no adult shall be considered neglected solely on the basis that such adult is receiving
193 religious nonmedical treatment or religious nonmedical nursing care in lieu of medical care, provided that
194 such treatment or care is performed in good faith and in accordance with the religious practices of the adult
195 and there is a written or oral expression of consent by that adult.

196 "Adult protective services" means services provided by the local department that are necessary to protect
197 an adult as defined in § 63.2-1603 from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

198 "Assisted living care" means a level of service provided by an assisted living facility for adults who may
199 have physical or mental impairments and require at least a moderate level of assistance with activities of daily
200 living.

201 "Assisted living facility" means any congregate residential setting that provides or coordinates personal
202 and health care services, 24-hour supervision, and assistance (scheduled and unscheduled) for the
203 maintenance or care of four or more adults who are aged or infirm or who have disabilities and who are cared
204 for in a primarily residential setting, except (i) a facility or portion of a facility licensed by the State Board of
205 Health or the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, but including any portion of
206 such facility not so licensed; (ii) the home or residence of an individual who cares for or maintains only
207 persons related to him by blood or marriage; (iii) a facility or portion of a facility serving individuals who are
208 infirm or who have disabilities between the ages of 18 and 21, or 22 if enrolled in an educational program for
209 individuals with disabilities pursuant to § 22.1-214, when such facility is licensed by the Department as a
210 children's residential facility under Chapter 17 (§ 63.2-1700 et seq.), but including any portion of the facility
211 not so licensed; and (iv) any housing project for individuals who are 62 years of age or older or individuals
212 with disabilities that provides no more than basic coordination of care services and is funded by the U.S.
213 Department of Housing and Urban Development, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or by the Virginia
214 Housing Development Authority. Included in this definition are any two or more places, establishments or
215 institutions owned or operated by a single entity and providing maintenance or care to a combined total of
216 four or more adults who are aged or infirm or who have disabilities. Maintenance or care means the
217 protection, general supervision and oversight of the physical and mental well-being of an individual who is
218 aged or infirm or who has a disability.

219 "Auxiliary grants" means cash payments made to certain aged, blind, or disabled individuals who receive
220 benefits under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, as amended, or would be eligible to receive these
221 benefits except for excess income.

222 "Birth family" or "birth sibling" means the child's biological family or biological sibling.

223 "Birth parent" means the child's biological parent and, for purposes of adoptive placement, means
224 parent(s) by previous adoption.

225 "Board" means the State Board of Social Services.

226 "Child" means any natural person who is (i) under 18 years of age or (ii) for purposes of the Fostering
227 Futures program set forth in Article 2 (§ 63.2-917 et seq.) of Chapter 9, under 21 years of age and meets the
228 eligibility criteria set forth in § 63.2-919.

229 "Child-placing agency" means (i) any person who places children in foster homes, adoptive homes or
230 independent living arrangements pursuant to § 63.2-1819, (ii) a local board that places children in foster
231 homes or adoptive homes pursuant to §§ 63.2-900, 63.2-903, and 63.2-1221, or (iii) an entity that assists
232 parents with the process of delegating parental and legal custodial powers of their children pursuant to
233 Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of Title 20. "Child-placing agency" does not include the persons to whom such
234 parental or legal custodial powers are delegated pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of Title 20.
235 Officers, employees, or agents of the Commonwealth, or any locality acting within the scope of their
236 authority as such, who serve as or maintain a child-placing agency, shall not be required to be licensed.

237 "Child-protective services" means the identification, receipt and immediate response to complaints and
238 reports of alleged child abuse or neglect for children under 18 years of age. It also includes assessment, and
239 arranging for and providing necessary protective and rehabilitative services for a child and his family when
240 the child has been found to have been abused or neglected or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

241 "Children's advocacy center" means a child-friendly facility that (i) enables law enforcement, child
242 protection, prosecution, mental health, medical, and victim advocacy professionals to work together to
243 investigate child abuse, help children heal from abuse, and hold offenders accountable; (ii) has completed, or
244 is in the process of completing, certain accreditation obligations and requires any forensic interview
245 conducted at such facility to only be conducted by a trained child forensic interviewer in a multidisciplinary

246 team collaborative effort; and (iii) is a member in good standing of the Children's Advocacy Centers of
247 Virginia.

248 "Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia" means the organizing entity for children's advocacy centers in
249 Virginia.

250 "Child support services" means any civil, criminal or administrative action taken by the Division of Child
251 Support Enforcement to locate parents; establish paternity; and establish, modify, enforce, or collect child
252 support, or child and spousal support.

253 "Child-welfare agency" means a child-placing agency, children's residential facility, or independent foster
254 home.

255 "Children's residential facility" means any facility, child-caring institution, or group home that is
256 maintained for the purpose of receiving children separated from their parents or guardians for full-time care,
257 maintenance, protection and guidance, or for the purpose of providing independent living services to persons
258 between 18 and 21 years of age who are in the process of transitioning out of foster care. Children's
259 residential facility shall not include:

260 1. A licensed or accredited educational institution whose pupils, in the ordinary course of events, return
261 annually to the homes of their parents or guardians for not less than two months of summer vacation;

262 2. An establishment required to be licensed as a summer camp by § 35.1-18; and

263 3. A licensed or accredited hospital legally maintained as such.

264 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of the Department, his designee or authorized representative.

265 "Department" means the State Department of Social Services.

266 "Department of Health and Human Services" means the Department of Health and Human Services of the
267 United States government or any department or agency thereof that may hereafter be designated as the agency
268 to administer the Social Security Act, as amended.

269 "Disposable income" means that part of the income due and payable of any individual remaining after the
270 deduction of any amount required by law to be withheld.

271 "Energy assistance" means benefits to assist low-income households with their home heating and cooling
272 needs, including, but not limited to, purchase of materials or substances used for home heating, repair or
273 replacement of heating equipment, emergency intervention in no-heat situations, purchase or repair of cooling
274 equipment, and payment of electric bills to operate cooling equipment, in accordance with § 63.2-805, or
275 provided under the Virginia Energy Assistance Program established pursuant to the Low-Income Home
276 Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (Title XXVI of P.L. 97-35), as amended.

277 "Family and permanency team" means the group of individuals assembled by the local department to
278 assist with determining planning and placement options for a child, which shall include, as appropriate, all
279 biological relatives and fictive kin of the child, as well as any professionals who have served as a resource to
280 the child or his family, such as teachers, medical or mental health providers, and clergy members. In the case
281 of a child who is 14 years of age or older, the family and permanency team shall also include any members of
282 the child's case planning team that were selected by the child in accordance with subsection A of § 16.1-281.

283 "Federal-Funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance program" means a program consistent with 42 U.S.C.
284 § 673 that provides, subject to a kinship guardianship assistance agreement developed in accordance with
285 § 63.2-1305, payments to eligible individuals who have received custody of a child of whom they had been
286 the foster parents.

287 "Fictive kin" means persons who are not related to a child by blood or adoption but have an established
288 relationship with the child or his family.

289 "Foster care placement" means placement of a child through (i) an agreement between the parents or
290 guardians and the local board where legal custody remains with the parents or guardians or (ii) an trustment
291 or commitment of the child to the local board or licensed child-placing agency. "Foster care placement" does
292 not include placement of a child in accordance with a power of attorney pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et
293 seq.) of Title 20.

294 "Foster home" means a residence approved by a child-placing agency or local board in which any child,
295 other than a child by birth or adoption of such person or a child who is the subject of a power of attorney to
296 delegate parental or legal custodial powers by his parents or legal custodian to the natural person who has
297 been designated the child's legal guardian pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of Title 20 and who
298 exercises legal authority over the child on a continuous basis for at least 24 hours without compensation,
299 resides as a member of the household.

300 "General relief" means money payments and other forms of relief made to those persons mentioned in
301 § 63.2-802 in accordance with the regulations of the Board and reimbursable in accordance with § 63.2-401.

302 "Independent foster home" means a private family home in which any child, other than a child by birth or
303 adoption of such person, resides as a member of the household and has been placed therein independently of
304 a child-placing agency except (i) a home in which are received only children related by birth or adoption of
305 the person who maintains such home and children of personal friends of such person; (ii) a home in which is
306 received a child or children committed under the provisions of subdivision A 4 of § 16.1-278.2, subdivision 6
307 of § 16.1-278.4, or subdivision A 13 of § 16.1-278.8; and (iii) a home in which are received only children

308 who are the subject of a properly executed power of attorney pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of
309 Title 20.

310 "Independent living" means a planned program of services designed to assist a child age 16 and over and
311 persons who are former foster care children or were formerly committed to the Department of Juvenile
312 Justice and are between the ages of 18 and 21 in transitioning to self-sufficiency.

313 "Independent living arrangement" means placement of (i) a child at least 16 years of age who is in the
314 custody of a local board or licensed child-placing agency by the local board or licensed child-placing agency
315 or (ii) a child at least 16 years of age or a person between the ages of 18 and 21 who was committed to the
316 Department of Juvenile Justice immediately prior to placement by the Department of Juvenile Justice, in a
317 living arrangement in which such child or person does not have daily substitute parental supervision.

318 "Independent living services" means services and activities provided to a child in foster care 14 years of
319 age or older who was committed or entrusted to a local board of social services, child welfare agency, or
320 private child-placing agency. "Independent living services" may also mean services and activities provided to
321 a person who (i) was in foster care on his 18th birthday and has not yet reached the age of 21 years; (ii) is
322 between the ages of 18 and 21 and who, immediately prior to his commitment to the Department of Juvenile
323 Justice, was in the custody of a local board of social services; or (iii) is a child at least 16 years of age or a
324 person between the ages of 18 and 21 who was committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice immediately
325 prior to placement in an independent living arrangement. Such services shall include counseling, education,
326 housing, employment, and money management skills development, access to essential documents, and other
327 appropriate services to help children or persons prepare for self-sufficiency.

328 "Independent physician" means a physician who is chosen by the resident of the assisted living facility
329 and who has no financial interest in the assisted living facility, directly or indirectly, as an owner, officer, or
330 employee or as an independent contractor with the residence.

331 "Intercountry placement" means the arrangement for the care of a child in an adoptive home or foster care
332 placement into or out of the Commonwealth by a licensed child-placing agency, court, or other entity
333 authorized to make such placements in accordance with the laws of the foreign country under which it
334 operates.

335 "Interstate placement" means the arrangement for the care of a child in an adoptive home, foster care
336 placement or in the home of the child's parent or with a relative or nonagency guardian, into or out of the
337 Commonwealth, by a child-placing agency or court when the full legal right of the child's parent or
338 nonagency guardian to plan for the child has been voluntarily terminated or limited or severed by the action
339 of any court.

340 "Kinship care" means the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives.

341 "Kinship guardian" means the adult relative of a child in a kinship guardianship established in accordance
342 with § 63.2-1305 or 63.2-1306 who has been awarded custody of the child by the court after acting as the
343 child's foster parent.

344 "Kinship guardianship" means a relationship established in accordance with § 63.2-1305 or 63.2-1306
345 between a child and an adult relative of the child who has formerly acted as the child's foster parent that is
346 intended to be permanent and self-sustaining as evidenced by the transfer by the court to the adult relative of
347 the child of the authority necessary to ensure the protection, education, care and control, and custody of the
348 child and the authority for decision making for the child.

349 "Local board" means the local board of social services representing one or more counties or cities.

350 "Local department" means the local department of social services of any county or city in the
351 Commonwealth.

352 "Local director" means the director or his designated representative of the local department of the city or
353 county.

354 "Merit system plan" means those regulations adopted by the Board in the development and operation of a
355 system of personnel administration meeting requirements of the federal Office of Personnel Management.

356 "Parental placement" means locating or effecting the placement of a child or the placing of a child in a
357 family home by the child's parent or legal guardian for the purpose of foster care or adoption.

358 "Public assistance" means Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); auxiliary grants to the
359 aged, blind, and disabled; medical assistance; energy assistance; ~~food stamps~~ *Supplemental Nutrition*
360 *Assistance Program (SNAP)*; employment services; child care; and general relief.

361 "Qualified assessor" means an entity contracting with the Department of Medical Assistance Services to
362 perform nursing facility pre-admission screening or to complete the uniform assessment instrument for a
363 home and community-based waiver program, including an independent physician contracting with the
364 Department of Medical Assistance Services to complete the uniform assessment instrument for residents of
365 assisted living facilities, or any hospital that has contracted with the Department of Medical Assistance
366 Services to perform nursing facility pre-admission screenings.

367 "Qualified individual" means a trained professional or licensed clinician who is not an employee of the
368 local board of social services or licensed child-placing agency that placed the child in a qualified residential
369 treatment program and is not affiliated with any placement setting in which children are placed by such local

370 board of social services or licensed child-placing agency.

371 "Qualified residential treatment program" means a program that (i) provides 24-hour residential placement
 372 services for children in foster care; (ii) has adopted a trauma-informed treatment model that meets the clinical
 373 and other needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders, including any clinical or other
 374 needs identified through assessments conducted pursuant to clause (viii) of this definition; (iii) employs
 375 registered or licensed nursing and other clinical staff who provide care, on site and within the scope of their
 376 practice, and are available 24 hours a day, 7 *seven* days a week; (iv) conducts outreach with the child's family
 377 members, including efforts to maintain connections between the child and his siblings and other family;
 378 documents and maintains records of such outreach efforts; and maintains contact information for any known
 379 biological family and fictive kin of the child; (v) whenever appropriate and in the best interest of the child,
 380 facilitates participation by family members in the child's treatment program before and after discharge and
 381 documents the manner in which such participation is facilitated; (vi) provides discharge planning and
 382 family-based aftercare support for at least six months after discharge; (vii) is licensed in accordance with 42
 383 U.S.C. § 671(a)(10) and accredited by an organization approved by the federal Secretary of Health and
 384 Human Services; and (viii) requires that any child placed in the program receive an assessment within 30
 385 days of such placement by a qualified individual that (a) assesses the strengths and needs of the child using an
 386 age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, and functional assessment tool approved by the Commissioner of
 387 Social Services; (b) identifies whether the needs of the child can be met through placement with a family
 388 member or in a foster home or, if not, in a placement setting authorized by 42 U.S.C. § 672(k)(2), including a
 389 qualified residential treatment program, that would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care
 390 for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short-term and long-term goals
 391 established for the child in his foster care or permanency plan; (c) establishes a list of short-term and
 392 long-term mental and behavioral health goals for the child; and (d) is documented in a written report to be
 393 filed with the court prior to any hearing on the child's placement pursuant to § 16.1-281, 16.1-282,
 394 16.1-282.1, or 16.1-282.2.

395 "Residential living care" means a level of service provided by an assisted living facility for adults who
 396 may have physical or mental impairments and require only minimal assistance with the activities of daily
 397 living. The definition of "residential living care" includes the services provided by independent living
 398 facilities that voluntarily become licensed.

399 "Sibling" means each of two or more children having one or more parents in common.

400 "Social services" means foster care, adoption, adoption assistance, child-protective services, domestic
 401 violence services, or any other services program implemented in accordance with regulations adopted by the
 402 Board. "Social services" also includes adult services pursuant to Article 4 (§ 51.5-144 et seq.) of Chapter 14
 403 of Title 51.5 and Chapter 16 (§ 63.2-1600 et seq.) and adult protective services pursuant to Article 5
 404 (§ 51.5-148) of Chapter 14 of Title 51.5 provided by local departments of social services in accordance with
 405 regulations and under the supervision of the Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

406 "Special order" means an order imposing an administrative sanction issued to any party licensed pursuant
 407 to this title by the Commissioner that has a stated duration of not more than 12 months. A special order shall
 408 be considered a case decision as defined in § 2.2-4001.

409 "State-Funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance program" means a program that provides payments to
 410 eligible individuals who have received custody of a relative child subject to a kinship guardianship assistance
 411 agreement developed in accordance with § 63.2-1306.

412 "Supervised independent living setting" means the residence of a person 18 years of age or older who is
 413 participating in the Fostering Futures program set forth in Article 2 (§ 63.2-917 et seq.) of Chapter 9 where
 414 supervision includes a monthly visit with a service worker or, when appropriate, contracted supervision.
 415 "Supervised independent living setting" does not include residential facilities or group homes.

416 "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families" or "TANF" means the program administered by the
 417 Department through which a relative can receive monthly cash assistance for the support of his eligible
 418 children.

419 "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-Unemployed Parent" or "TANF-UP" means the Temporary
 420 Assistance for Needy Families program for families in which both natural or adoptive parents of a child
 421 reside in the home and neither parent is exempt from Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW)
 422 participation under § 63.2-609.

423 "Title IV-E Foster Care" means a federal program authorized under §§ 472 and 473 of the Social Security
 424 Act, as amended, and administered by the Department through which foster care is provided on behalf of
 425 qualifying children.

426 **§ 63.2-105. Confidential records and information concerning social services; child-protective**
 427 **services and child-placing agencies.**

428 A. The local department may disclose the contents of records and information learned during the course of
 429 a child-protective services investigation or during the provision of child-protective services to a family,
 430 without a court order and without the consent of the family, to a person having a legitimate interest when in
 431 the judgment of the local department such disclosure is in the best interest of the child who is the subject of

432 the records. Persons having a legitimate interest in child-protective services records of local departments
433 include, but are not limited to, (i) any person who is responsible for investigating a report of known or
434 suspected abuse or neglect or for providing services to a child or family that is the subject of a report,
435 including multidisciplinary teams and family assessment and planning teams referenced in subsections ~~F~~ I and
436 ~~K~~ J of § 63.2-1503, law-enforcement agencies and attorneys for the Commonwealth; (ii) child welfare or
437 human services agencies of the Commonwealth or its political subdivisions when those agencies request
438 information to determine the compliance of any person with a child-protective services plan or an order of
439 any court; (iii) personnel of the school or child day program as defined in § 63.2-100 attended by the child so
440 that the local department can receive information from such personnel on an ongoing basis concerning the
441 child's health and behavior, and the activities of the child's custodian; (iv) a parent, grandparent, or any other
442 person when such parent, grandparent or other person would be considered by the local department as a
443 potential caretaker of the child in the event the local department has to remove the child from his custodian;
444 (v) the Commitment Review Committee and the Office of the Attorney General for the purposes of sexually
445 violent predator civil commitments pursuant to Chapter 9 (§ 37.2-900 et seq.) of Title 37.2; and (vi) the staff
446 of (a) a court services unit, (b) the Department of Juvenile Justice, (c) a local community services board, or
447 (d) the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services who are providing treatment, services,
448 or care for a child who is the subject of such records for a purpose relevant to the provision of the treatment,
449 services, or care, including the immediate identification of children who may be receiving or who have
450 received treatment, services, or care from the local agencies and the Department of Juvenile Justice, when the
451 local agencies have entered into a formal agreement with the Department of Juvenile Justice to provide
452 coordinated services to such children, provided that any court services unit or local community services board
453 to which such records are disclosed in accordance with this paragraph shall not further disclose any
454 information received unless such further disclosure is expressly required by law.

455 The model memorandum of understanding developed in accordance with § 66-10.3 may serve as the
456 formal agreement that is required pursuant to this subsection, but any formal agreement that is entered into by
457 the local agencies and the Department of Juvenile Justice shall be reviewed by the Office of the Attorney
458 General before such agreement may take effect.

459 Whenever a local department exercises its discretion to release otherwise confidential information to any
460 person who meets one or more of these descriptions, the local department shall be presumed to have
461 exercised its discretion in a reasonable and lawful manner.

462 B. Any person who has not been legally adopted in accordance with the provisions of this title and who
463 was a child for whom all parental rights and responsibilities have been terminated, shall not have access to
464 any information from a child-placing agency with respect to the identity of the biological family, except (i)
465 upon application of the child who is 18 or more years of age, (ii) upon order of a circuit court entered upon
466 good cause shown, and (iii) after notice to and opportunity for hearing by the applicant for such order and the
467 child-placing agency or local board that had custody of the child.

468 An eligible person who is a resident of Virginia may apply for the court order provided for herein to (a)
469 the circuit court of the county or city where the person resides or (b) the circuit court of the county or city
470 where the principal office of the child-placing agency or local board that controls the information sought by
471 the person is located. An eligible person who is not a resident of Virginia shall apply for such a court order to
472 the circuit court of the county or city where the principal office of the child-placing agency or local board that
473 controls the information sought by the person is located.

474 If the identity and whereabouts of the biological family are known to the agency or local board, the court
475 may require the agency or local board to advise the biological parents of the pendency of the application for
476 such order. In determining good cause for the disclosure of such information, the court shall consider the
477 relative effects of such action upon the applicant for such order and upon the biological parents.

478 **§ 63.2-203. Powers and duties of Commissioner generally.**

479 A. The Commissioner, subject to the regulations of the Board, shall have all of the powers and perform all
480 the duties conferred upon him by law, *including the authority to create and enforce corrective action plans*
481 *pursuant to § 63.2-203.1.* Except as otherwise provided, he shall supervise the administration of the
482 provisions of this title and shall see that all laws pertaining to the Department are carried out to their true
483 intent and spirit.

484 B. The Commissioner shall enforce the regulations adopted by the Board.

485 **§ 63.2-203.1. Intervention by Commissioner; corrective action plans; assumption of temporary control**
486 **of local boards and local departments.**

487 A. *In cases where a local department requests assistance, the Commissioner shall have the authority to*
488 *utilize Department staff or contract with private entities to provide public assistance and social services*
489 *programs in the locality served by the local board.*

490 B. *The Commissioner shall have the authority to create and enforce a corrective action plan for any local*
491 *board and local department that, in the Commissioner's discretion, (i) fails to administer public assistance*
492 *and social services programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations or (ii) takes any action or*
493 *fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a child or adult.*

494 *The corrective action plan shall (a) include specific objectives that the local board shall meet in order to*
 495 *comply with applicable laws and regulations and ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children and*
 496 *adults about whom a report of abuse or neglect was made or who is in the local board's supervision and*
 497 *control and (b) set the date by which such objectives shall be completed, which shall not extend beyond 90*
 498 *days after implementation of the corrective action plan unless the Commissioner determines that the*
 499 *objectives of the corrective action plan cannot be reasonably accomplished within such time frame. During*
 500 *the time the corrective action plan is in effect, the Commissioner may direct Department staff to provide*
 501 *assistance to the local board, monitor its progress in meeting the objectives stated in the plan, and take any*
 502 *measures necessary to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children about whom a report of abuse or*
 503 *neglect was made in accordance with the provisions of this chapter or who is in the local board's supervision*
 504 *and control. The Commissioner shall provide regular updates to the chairman of the Board, chairman of the*
 505 *local board, and local director regarding the local board's progress in meeting the objectives of the*
 506 *corrective action plan.*

507 *Prior to implementing a corrective action plan, the Commissioner shall provide written notice of his*
 508 *intent to implement the corrective action plan and the reasons that such plan was developed to the chairman*
 509 *of the Board, chairman of the local board, and local director. Upon request by the chairman of the Board,*
 510 *chairman of the local board, or local director, the Commissioner shall hold a hearing to determine whether a*
 511 *corrective action plan is appropriate.*

512 *C. If the local board fails to timely comply with the corrective action plan, the Commissioner shall have*
 513 *the authority to temporarily assume control over all or part of the local board's operations. Upon assuming*
 514 *such control, the Commissioner may utilize Department staff or contract with private entities to provide*
 515 *public assistance and social services in the locality served by the local board. For any period during which a*
 516 *local board is under the Commissioner's control, the Commissioner shall work with the local board and local*
 517 *director to make any adjustments necessary to facilitate the local board's resumption of control over its*
 518 *public assistance and social services. The Commissioner shall remit control of such public assistance and*
 519 *social services to the local board upon determining that the local board has made all adjustments necessary*
 520 *to ensure that public assistance and social services are provided in compliance with state and federal law*
 521 *and regulations and in a manner that adequately protects the health, safety, and well-being of all children*
 522 *about whom a report of abuse or neglect was made in accordance with the provisions of this chapter or who*
 523 *is in the local board's supervision and control.*

524 *D. If the local board fails to timely comply with the corrective action plan, the Commissioner, in*
 525 *coordination with the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, shall have the authority to*
 526 *withhold any funds of the Commonwealth otherwise appropriated for use by the local board until such time*
 527 *that it fully complies with the corrective action plan.*

528 *E. For any period during which the local board is under the Commissioner's control pursuant to*
 529 *subsection C, the local board shall maintain the local share of the funding for the local department at an*
 530 *unreduced amount.*

531 **§ 63.2-319.1. Intervention by Commissioner; corrective action plans; assumption of temporary control**
 532 **of local boards.**

533 *A. In cases where a local department of social services requests assistance, the Commissioner shall have*
 534 *the authority to utilize Department staff or contract with private entities to provide child welfare services in*
 535 *the locality served by the local board.*

536 *B. The Commissioner shall have the authority to create and enforce a corrective action plan for any local*
 537 *board that, in the Commissioner's discretion, (i) fails to provide child welfare services in accordance with*
 538 *applicable law or regulations or (ii) takes any action or fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk*
 539 *to the health, safety, or well-being of a child. The corrective action plan shall (a) include specific objectives*
 540 *that the local board shall meet in order to comply with applicable laws and regulations and ensure the*
 541 *health, safety, and well-being of all children about whom a report of abuse or neglect was made or who is in*
 542 *the local board's supervision and control and (b) set the date by which such objectives shall be completed,*
 543 *which shall not extend beyond 90 days after implementation of the corrective action plan unless the*
 544 *Commissioner determines that the objectives of the corrective action plan cannot be reasonably*
 545 *accomplished within such time frame. During the time the corrective action plan is in effect, the*
 546 *Commissioner may direct Department staff to provide assistance to the local board, monitor its progress in*
 547 *meeting the objectives stated in the plan, and take any measures necessary to protect the health, safety, and*
 548 *well-being of children about whom a report of abuse or neglect was properly made or who are in the local*
 549 *board's supervision and control. The Commissioner shall provide regular updates to the chairman of the*
 550 *Board, chairman of the local board, and local director regarding the local board's progress in meeting the*
 551 *objectives of the corrective action plan.*

552 *Prior to implementing a corrective action plan, the Commissioner shall provide written notice of his*
 553 *intent to implement the corrective action plan and the reasons that such plan was developed to the chairman*
 554 *of the Board, chairman of the local board, and local director. Upon request by the chairman of the Board,*
 555 *chairman of the local board, or local director, the Commissioner shall hold a hearing to determine whether a*

556 *corrective action plan is appropriate.*

557 *C. If the local board fails to timely comply with the corrective action plan, the Commissioner shall have*
 558 *the authority to temporarily assume control over all or part of the local board's child welfare services. Upon*
 559 *assuming such control, the Commissioner may utilize Department staff or contract with private entities to*
 560 *provide child welfare services in the locality served by the local board. For any period during which a local*
 561 *board is under the Commissioner's control, the Commissioner shall work with the local board and local*
 562 *director to make any adjustments necessary to facilitate the local board's resumption of control over its child*
 563 *welfare services. The Commissioner shall remit control of such child welfare services to the local board upon*
 564 *determining that the local board has made all adjustments necessary to ensure that child welfare services are*
 565 *provided in compliance with state and federal law and regulations and in a manner that adequately protects*
 566 *the health, safety, and well-being of all children about whom a report of abuse or neglect was made in*
 567 *accordance with the provisions of this chapter or who are in the local board's supervision and control.*

568 *D. If the local board fails to timely comply with the corrective action plan, the Commissioner, in*
 569 *coordination with the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, shall have the authority to*
 570 *withhold any funds of the Commonwealth otherwise appropriated for use by the local board until such time*
 571 *that it fully complies with the corrective action plan.*

572 *E. For any period during which the local board is under the Commissioner's control, the local board shall*
 573 *maintain the local share of funding for the local department at an unreduced amount.*

574 **§ 63.2-1501. Definitions.**

575 As used in this chapter unless the context requires a different meaning:

576 "Court" means the juvenile and domestic relations district court of the county or city.

577 "*Local department*" means the local department of social services in the county or city in the
 578 Commonwealth where the alleged victim child resides or in which the alleged abuse or neglect is believed to
 579 have occurred. If neither of these is known, then the local department shall be the local department of social
 580 services in the county or city where the abuse or neglect was discovered.

581 "Prevention" means efforts that (i) promote health and competence in people and (ii) create, promote and
 582 strengthen environments that nurture people in their development.

583 **§ 63.2-1502. Establishment of Child-Protective Services Unit; duties.**

584 There is created a Child-Protective Services Unit in the Department that shall have the following powers
 585 and duties:

586 1. To evaluate and strengthen all local, regional, and state programs dealing with child abuse and neglect.

587 2. To assume primary responsibility for directing the planning and funding of child-protective services.

588 This shall include reviewing and approving the annual proposed plans and budgets for protective services
 589 submitted by the local departments.

590 3. To assist in developing programs aimed at discovering and preventing the many factors causing child
 591 abuse and neglect.

592 4. To prepare and disseminate, including the presentation of, educational programs and materials on child
 593 abuse and neglect.

594 5. To provide educational programs for professionals required by law to make reports under this chapter.

595 6. To establish standards of training and provide educational programs to qualify workers in the field of
 596 child-protective services. Such standards of training shall include provisions regarding the legal duties of the
 597 workers in order to protect the constitutional and statutory rights and safety of children and families from the
 598 initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.

599 7. To establish standards of training and educational programs to qualify workers to determine whether
 600 complaints of abuse or neglect of a child in a private or state-operated hospital, institution, or other facility; or
 601 public school; are founded.

602 8. To maintain staff qualified pursuant to Board regulations to assist local department personnel in
 603 determining whether an employee of a private or state-operated hospital, institution, or other facility or an
 604 employee of a school board; abused or neglected a child in such hospital, institution, or other facility; or
 605 public school.

606 9. To monitor the processing and determination of cases where an employee of a private or state-operated
 607 hospital, institution or other facility; or an employee of a school board; is suspected of abusing or neglecting a
 608 child in such hospital, institution, or other facility; or public school.

609 10. To help coordinate child-protective services at the state, regional, and local levels with the efforts of
 610 other state and voluntary social, medical, and legal agencies.

611 11. To maintain a child abuse and neglect information system that includes all cases of child abuse and
 612 neglect within the Commonwealth.

613 12. To provide for methods to preserve the confidentiality of all records in order to protect the rights of
 614 the child; and his parents or guardians.

615 13. To establish *and ensure the implementation of* minimum training requirements for workers and
 616 supervisors on family abuse and domestic violence, including the relationship between domestic violence and
 617 child abuse and neglect.

618 14. To establish *and ensure the implementation of* minimum training requirements for workers and
 619 supervisors on identifying, assessing, and providing comprehensive services for children who are victims of
 620 sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking as defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22
 621 U.S.C. § 7102 et seq., and in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, 42 U.S.C. § 5101 et seq.,
 622 including efforts to coordinate with law-enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies such as
 623 runaway and homeless youth shelters to serve this population.

624 15. *To establish and maintain within the Department a hotline to receive any and all reports or*
 625 *complaints of child abuse and neglect on a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-per-week basis, and effectively and*
 626 *efficiently respond to such reports or complaints. The Department shall record all complaints into the child*
 627 *welfare information system.*

628 16. *To assess each complaint of child abuse and neglect and determine whether the report or complaint is*
 629 *valid pursuant to § 63.2-1508. For all valid complaints, the Department shall make a determination as to*
 630 *whether the local department of jurisdiction shall conduct an investigation pursuant to § 63.2-1505 or, if*
 631 *designated as a child-protective services differential response agency by the Department according to*
 632 *§ 63.2-1504, a family assessment pursuant to § 63.2-1506. The Department shall immediately notify the local*
 633 *department of jurisdiction of the valid complaint.*

634 17. *To notify the local attorney for the Commonwealth and the local law-enforcement agency of all*
 635 *invalid complaints of suspected child abuse or neglect received by them involving (i) any death of a child; (ii)*
 636 *any injury or threatened injury to the child in which a felony or Class 1 misdemeanor is also suspected; (iii)*
 637 *any sexual abuse, suspected sexual abuse or other sexual offense involving a child, including the use or*
 638 *display of the child in sexually explicit visual material, as defined in § 18.2-374.1; (iv) any abduction of a*
 639 *child; (v) any felony or Class 1 misdemeanor drug offense involving a child; or (vi) any case of contributing*
 640 *to the delinquency of a minor in violation of § 18.2-371, immediately, but in no case more than two hours*
 641 *after receipt of the invalid complaint.*

642 18. *To widely publicize a telephone number and website for receiving complaints and reports.*

643 **§ 63.2-1503. Local departments to establish child-protective services; duties.**

644 A. Each local department shall establish child-protective services under a departmental coordinator within
 645 such department or with one or more adjacent local departments that shall be staffed with qualified personnel
 646 pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board. ~~The local department shall be the public agency responsible for~~
 647 ~~receiving and responding to complaints and reports, except that (i) in cases where the reports or complaints~~
 648 ~~are to be made to the court and the judge determines that no local department within a reasonable geographic~~
 649 ~~distance can impartially respond to the report, the court shall assign the report to the court services unit for~~
 650 ~~evaluation; and (ii) in cases where an employee at a private or state-operated hospital, institution or other~~
 651 ~~facility, or an employee of a school board is suspected of abusing or neglecting a child in such hospital,~~
 652 ~~institution or other facility, or public school, the local department shall request the Department and the~~
 653 ~~relevant private or state-operated hospital, institution or other facility, or school board to assist in conducting~~
 654 ~~a joint investigation in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board, in consultation with the~~
 655 ~~Departments of Education, Health, Medical Assistance Services, Behavioral Health and Developmental~~
 656 ~~Services, Juvenile Justice and Corrections.~~

657 B. ~~The local department shall ensure, through its own personnel or through cooperative arrangements with~~
 658 ~~other local agencies, the capability of receiving reports or complaints and responding to them promptly on a~~
 659 ~~24 hours a day, seven days per week basis that any complaints received by them shall be immediately~~
 660 ~~forwarded to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline.~~

661 C. ~~The local department shall widely publicize a telephone number for receiving complaints and reports.~~

662 ~~D.~~ The local department shall notify the local attorney for the Commonwealth and the local
 663 law-enforcement agency of all *valid* complaints of suspected child abuse or neglect *received by the local*
 664 *department from the Department* involving (i) any death of a child; (ii) any injury or threatened injury to the
 665 child in which a felony or Class 1 misdemeanor is also suspected; (iii) any sexual abuse, suspected sexual
 666 abuse or other sexual offense involving a child, including but not limited to the use or display of the child in
 667 sexually explicit visual material, as defined in § 18.2-374.1; (iv) any abduction of a child; (v) any felony or
 668 Class 1 misdemeanor drug offense involving a child; or (vi) contributing to the delinquency of a minor in
 669 violation of § 18.2-371, immediately, but in no case more than two hours ~~of~~ *after* receipt of the *valid*
 670 complaint, and shall provide the attorney for the Commonwealth and the local law-enforcement agency with
 671 records and information of the local department, including records related to any complaints of abuse or
 672 neglect involving the victim or the alleged perpetrator, related to the investigation of the complaint. The local
 673 department shall notify the local attorney for the Commonwealth of all *valid* complaints of suspected child
 674 abuse or neglect involving the child's being left alone in the same dwelling with a person to whom the child is
 675 not related by blood or marriage and who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which
 676 registration is required as a Tier III offender pursuant to § 9.1-902, immediately, but in no case more than two
 677 hours ~~of~~ *after* receipt of the *valid* complaint, and shall provide the attorney for the Commonwealth with
 678 records and information of the local department that would help determine whether a violation of post-release
 679 conditions, probation, parole, or court order has occurred due to the nonrelative offender's contact with the

680 child. The local department shall not allow reports of the death of the victim from other local agencies to
681 substitute for direct reports to the attorney for the Commonwealth and the local law-enforcement agency. The
682 local department shall develop, when practicable, memoranda of understanding for responding to reports of
683 child abuse and neglect with local law enforcement and the attorney for the Commonwealth.

684 In each case in which the local department notifies the local law-enforcement agency of a complaint
685 pursuant to this subsection, the local department shall, within two business days of delivery of the
686 notification, complete a written report, on a form provided by the Board for such purpose, which shall include
687 (a) the name of the representative of the local department providing notice required by this subsection; (b) the
688 name of the local law-enforcement officer who received such notice; (c) the date and time that notification
689 was made; (d) the identity of the victim; (e) the identity of the person alleged to have abused or neglected the
690 child, if known; (f) the clause or clauses in this subsection that describe the reasons for the notification; and
691 (g) the signatures, which may be electronic signatures, of the representatives of the local department making
692 the notification and the local law-enforcement officer receiving the notification. Such report shall be included
693 in the record of the investigation and may be submitted either in writing or electronically.

694 ~~E.~~ D. When abuse or neglect is suspected in any case involving the death of a child, the local department
695 shall report the case immediately to the regional medical examiner and the local law-enforcement agency.

696 ~~F.~~ E. The local department shall use reasonable diligence to locate (i) any child for whom a ~~report~~ *valid*
697 *complaint* of suspected abuse or neglect has been received and is under investigation, receiving family
698 assessment, or for whom a founded determination of abuse and neglect has been made and a child-protective
699 services case opened and (ii) persons who are the subject of a report that is under investigation or receiving
700 family assessment, if the whereabouts of the child or such persons are unknown to the local department.

701 ~~G.~~ F. When an abused or neglected child and the persons who are the subject of an open child-protective
702 services case have relocated out of the jurisdiction of the local department, the local department shall notify
703 the child-protective services agency in the jurisdiction to which such persons have relocated, whether inside
704 or outside of the Commonwealth, and forward to such agency relevant portions of the case record. The
705 receiving local department shall arrange protective and rehabilitative services as required by this section.

706 ~~H.~~ G. When a child for whom a ~~report~~ *valid complaint* of suspected abuse or neglect has been received
707 and is under investigation or receiving family assessment and the child and the child's parents or other
708 persons responsible for the child's care who are the subject of the report that is under investigation or family
709 assessment have relocated out of the jurisdiction of the local department, the local department shall notify the
710 child-protective services agency in the jurisdiction to which the child and such persons have relocated,
711 whether inside or outside of the Commonwealth, and complete such investigation or family assessment by
712 requesting such agency's assistance in completing the investigation or family assessment. The local
713 department that completes the investigation or family assessment shall forward to the receiving agency
714 relevant portions of the case record in order for the receiving agency to arrange protective and rehabilitative
715 services as required by this section.

716 ~~I.~~ H. Upon receipt of a ~~report~~ *valid complaint* of child abuse or neglect, the local department shall
717 ~~determine the validity of such report and shall make a determination to~~ conduct an investigation pursuant to
718 § 63.2-1505 or, if designated as a child-protective services differential response agency by the Department
719 according to § 63.2-1504, a family assessment pursuant to § 63.2-1506.

720 ~~J.~~ I. The local department shall foster, when practicable, the creation, maintenance, and coordination of
721 hospital and community-based multidisciplinary teams that shall include where possible, but not be limited
722 to, members of the medical, mental health, social work, nursing, education, legal, and law-enforcement
723 professions. Such teams shall assist the local departments in identifying abused and neglected children;
724 coordinating medical, social, and legal services for the children and their families; developing innovative
725 programs for detection and prevention of child abuse; promoting community concern and action in the area of
726 child abuse and neglect; and disseminating information to the general public with respect to the problem of
727 child abuse and neglect and the facilities and prevention and treatment methods available to combat child
728 abuse and neglect. These teams may be the family assessment and planning teams established pursuant to
729 § 2.2-5207. Multidisciplinary teams may develop agreements regarding the exchange of information among
730 the parties for the purposes of the investigation and disposition of complaints of child abuse and neglect,
731 delivery of services, and child protection. Any information exchanged in accordance with the agreement shall
732 not be considered to be a violation of the provisions of § 63.2-102, 63.2-104, or 63.2-105.

733 The local department shall also coordinate its efforts in the provision of these services for abused and
734 neglected children with the judge and staff of the court.

735 ~~K.~~ J. The local department may develop multidisciplinary teams to provide consultation to the local
736 department during the investigation of selected cases involving child abuse or neglect; and to make
737 recommendations regarding the prosecution of such cases. These teams may include, but are not limited to,
738 members of the medical, mental health, legal, and law-enforcement professions, including the attorney for the
739 Commonwealth or his designee; a local child-protective services representative; and the guardian ad litem or
740 other court-appointed advocate for the child. Any information exchanged for the purpose of such consultation
741 shall not be considered a violation of § 63.2-102, 63.2-104, or 63.2-105.

742 ~~L.~~ K. The local department shall report annually on its activities concerning abused and neglected children
743 to the court and to the Child-Protective Services Unit in the Department on forms provided by the
744 Department.

745 ~~M.~~ L. Statements, or any evidence derived therefrom, made to local department child-protective services
746 personnel, or to any person performing the duties of such personnel, by any person accused of the abuse,
747 injury, neglect, or death of a child after the arrest of such person, shall not be used in evidence in the
748 case-in-chief against such person in the criminal proceeding on the question of guilt or innocence over the
749 objection of the accused, unless the statement was made after such person was fully advised (i) of his right to
750 remain silent, (ii) that anything he says may be used against him in a court of law, (iii) that he has a right to
751 the presence of an attorney during any interviews, and (iv) that if he cannot afford an attorney, one will be
752 appointed for him prior to any questioning.

753 ~~N.~~ M. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the local department, in accordance with Board
754 regulations, shall transmit information regarding reports, complaints, family assessments, and investigations
755 involving children of active duty members of the United States Armed Forces or members of their household
756 to family advocacy representatives of the United States Armed Forces.

757 ~~O.~~ N. The local department shall notify the custodial parent and make reasonable efforts to notify the
758 noncustodial parent as those terms are defined in § 63.2-1900 of a report of suspected abuse or neglect of a
759 child who is the subject of an investigation or is receiving family assessment, in those cases in which such
760 custodial or noncustodial parent is not the subject of the investigation.

761 ~~P.~~ O. The local department shall (i) notify the Superintendent of Public Instruction without delay when an
762 individual holding a license issued by the Board of Education is the subject of a founded complaint of child
763 abuse or neglect and shall transmit identifying information regarding such individual if the local department
764 knows the person holds a license issued by the Board of Education and (ii) notify the Superintendent of
765 Public Instruction without delay if the founded complaint of child abuse or neglect is dismissed following an
766 appeal pursuant to § 63.2-1526. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to affect the rights of any
767 individual holding a license issued by the Board of Education to any hearings or appeals otherwise provided
768 by law. Any information exchanged for the purpose of this subsection shall not be considered a violation of
769 § 63.2-102, 63.2-104, or 63.2-105.

770 **§ 63.2-1508. Valid report or complaint.**

771 A. A valid report or complaint means the ~~local department~~ *Department* has evaluated the information and
772 allegations of the report or complaint and determined that the local department shall conduct an investigation,
773 family assessment, or human trafficking assessment because the following elements are present:

- 774 1. The alleged victim child or children are under 18 years of age at the time of the complaint or report;
- 775 2. The alleged abuser is the alleged victim child's parent or other caretaker or, for purposes of abuse or
776 neglect described in subdivision 4 of the definition of "abused or neglected child" in § 63.2-100, an intimate
777 partner of such parent or caretaker;
- 778 3. The ~~local department receiving the complaint or report has jurisdiction~~ *alleged abuse or neglect*
779 *occurred in the Commonwealth or the alleged victim child resides in the Commonwealth;* and
- 780 4. The circumstances ~~described~~ *allege suspected* child abuse or neglect.

781 B. A valid report or complaint regarding a child who has been identified as a victim of sex trafficking or
782 severe forms of trafficking as defined in the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C §
783 7102 et seq.) and in the federal Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22) may be
784 established regardless of who the alleged abuser is or whether the alleged abuser has been identified.

785 C. Nothing in this section shall relieve any person specified in § 63.2-1509 from making a report required
786 by that section, regardless of the identity of the person suspected to have caused such abuse or neglect.

787 ~~D. If the local department receiving the complaint or report does not have jurisdiction, and the local~~
788 ~~department that has jurisdiction to investigate such complaint or report is located in the Commonwealth, the~~
789 ~~local department that received the report or complaint shall forward the complaint or report to the appropriate~~
790 ~~local department.~~

791 **§ 63.2-1509. Requirement that certain injuries to children be reported by physicians, nurses,**
792 **teachers, etc.; penalty for failure to report.**

793 A. The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity, have reason to suspect that a child
794 is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the ~~local department of the county or~~
795 ~~city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the~~
796 ~~Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline:~~

- 797 1. Any person licensed to practice medicine or any of the healing arts;
- 798 2. Any hospital resident or intern; and any person employed in the nursing profession;
- 799 3. Any person employed as a social worker or family-services specialist;
- 800 4. Any probation officer;
- 801 5. Any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten, or child day program,
802 as that term is defined in § 22.1-289.02;
- 803 6. Any person providing full-time or part-time child care for pay on a regularly planned basis;

- 804 7. Any mental health professional;
805 8. Any law-enforcement officer or animal control officer;
806 9. Any mediator eligible to receive court referrals pursuant to § 8.01-576.8;
807 10. Any professional staff person, not previously enumerated, employed by a private or state-operated
808 hospital, institution, or facility to which children have been committed or where children have been placed
809 for care and treatment;
810 11. Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization
811 responsible for the care, custody, or control of children;
812 12. Any person who is designated a court-appointed special advocate pursuant to Article 5 (§ 9.1-151 et
813 seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 9.1;
814 13. Any person 18 years of age or older who has received training approved by the Department of Social
815 Services for the purposes of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect;
816 14. Any person employed by a local department as defined in § 63.2-100 who determines eligibility for
817 public assistance;
818 15. Any emergency medical services provider certified by the Board of Health pursuant to § 32.1-111.5,
819 unless such provider immediately reports the matter directly to the attending physician at the hospital to
820 which the child is transported, who shall make such report forthwith;
821 16. Any athletic coach, director, or other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering
822 with a public or private sports organization or team;
823 17. Administrators or employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth centers,
824 and youth recreation programs;
825 18. Any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education other than an attorney who
826 is employed by a public or private institution of higher education as it relates to information gained in the
827 course of providing legal representation to a client;
828 19. Any minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or duly accredited practitioner of any religious organization or
829 denomination usually referred to as a church, unless the information supporting the suspicion of child abuse
830 or neglect (i) is required by the doctrine of the religious organization or denomination to be kept in a
831 confidential manner or (ii) would be subject to § 8.01-400 or 19.2-271.3 if offered as evidence in court; and
832 20. Any person who engages in the practice of behavior analysis, as defined in § 54.1-2900.
- 833 ~~If neither the locality in which the child resides nor where the abuse or neglect is believed to have~~
834 ~~occurred is known, then such report shall be made to the local department of the county or city where the~~
835 ~~abuse or neglect was discovered or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline.~~
- 836 ~~If an employee of the local department is suspected of abusing or neglecting a child, the report shall be~~
837 ~~made to the court of the county or city where the abuse or neglect was discovered. Upon receipt of such a~~
838 ~~report by the court, the judge shall assign the report to a local department that is not the employer of the~~
839 ~~suspected employee for investigation or family assessment. The judge may consult with the Department in~~
840 ~~selecting a local department to respond to the report or the complaint.~~
- 841 If the information is received by a teacher, staff member, resident, intern, or nurse in the course of
842 professional services in a hospital, school, or similar institution, such person may, in place of said report,
843 immediately notify the person in charge of the institution or department, or his designee, who shall make such
844 report forthwith. If the initial report of suspected abuse or neglect is made to the person in charge of the
845 institution or department, or his designee, pursuant to this subsection, such person shall notify the teacher,
846 staff member, resident, intern, or nurse who made the initial report when the report of suspected child abuse
847 or neglect is made to the ~~local department or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline,~~ and
848 of the name of the individual receiving the report, and shall forward any communication resulting from the
849 report, including any information about any actions taken regarding the report, to the person who made the
850 initial report.
- 851 ~~The initial report may be an oral report but such report shall be reduced to writing by the child abuse~~
852 ~~coordinator of the local department on a form prescribed by the Board.~~ Any person required to make the
853 report pursuant to this subsection shall disclose all information that is the basis for his suspicion of abuse or
854 neglect of the child and, upon request, shall make available to the child-protective services coordinator and
855 the local department, which is the agency of jurisdiction, any information, records, or reports that document
856 the basis for the report. All persons required by this subsection to report suspected abuse or neglect who
857 maintain a record of a child who is the subject of such a report shall cooperate with the investigating agency
858 and shall make related information, records, and reports available to the investigating agency unless such
859 disclosure violates the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g). Provision of
860 such information, records, and reports by a health care provider shall not be prohibited by § 8.01-399.
861 Criminal investigative reports received from law-enforcement agencies shall not be further disseminated by
862 the investigating agency nor shall they be subject to public disclosure.
- 863 B. For purposes of subsection A, "reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected" shall, due to the
864 special medical needs of infants affected by substance exposure, include (i) a finding made by a health care
865 provider within six weeks of the birth of a child that the child was born affected by substance abuse or

866 experiencing withdrawal symptoms resulting from in utero drug exposure; (ii) a diagnosis made by a health
 867 care provider within four years following a child's birth that the child has an illness, disease, or condition that,
 868 to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, is attributable to maternal abuse of a controlled substance during
 869 pregnancy; or (iii) a diagnosis made by a health care provider within four years following a child's birth that
 870 the child has a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder attributable to in utero exposure to alcohol. When "reason to
 871 suspect" is based upon this subsection, such fact shall be included in the report along with the facts relied
 872 upon by the person making the report. Such reports shall not constitute a per se finding of child abuse or
 873 neglect. If a health care provider in a licensed hospital makes any finding or diagnosis set forth in clause (i),
 874 (ii), or (iii), the hospital shall require the development of a written discharge plan under protocols established
 875 by the hospital pursuant to subdivision B 6 of § 32.1-127.

876 C. Any person who makes a report or provides records or information pursuant to subsection A or who
 877 testifies in any judicial proceeding arising from such report, records, or information shall be immune from
 878 any civil or criminal liability or administrative penalty or sanction on account of such report, records,
 879 information, or testimony, unless such person acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

880 D. Any person required to file a report pursuant to this section who fails to do so as soon as possible, but
 881 not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect, shall be
 882 fined not more than \$500 for the first failure and for any subsequent failures not less than \$1,000. In cases
 883 evidencing acts or attempted acts of rape, sodomy, aggravated sexual battery, or object sexual penetration as
 884 defined in Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, a person who knowingly and intentionally
 885 fails to make the report required pursuant to this section is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

886 E. No person shall be required to make a report pursuant to this section if the person has actual knowledge
 887 that the same matter has already been reported to the local department or the Department's toll-free child
 888 abuse and neglect hotline.

889 **§ 63.2-1510.1. Conflict of interest when local department employee is alleged abuser; duties of court**
 890 **when assigning valid complaint.**

891 *If an employee of the local department is suspected of abusing or neglecting a child, the complaint shall*
 892 *be made to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline. If the complaint is determined valid,*
 893 *the Department shall forward the valid complaint to the court of the county or city where the abuse or neglect*
 894 *occurred or where the victim child resides. Upon receipt of a valid complaint by the court, the judge shall*
 895 *assign the complaint to a local department that is not the employer of the suspected employee for an*
 896 *investigation or family assessment or, if the judge believes that no local department in a reasonable*
 897 *geographic distance can be impartial in responding to the reported case, the judge shall assign the report to*
 898 *the court service unit of his court for evaluation. The judge may consult with the Department in selecting a*
 899 *local department to respond to the complaint.*

900 **§ 63.2-1512. Immunity of person making report, etc., from liability.**

901 Any person making a report pursuant to § 63.2-1509, a complaint pursuant to § 63.2-1510, or who takes a
 902 child into custody pursuant to § 63.2-1517, or who participates in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom,
 903 shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability in connection therewith, unless it is proven that such
 904 person acted in bad faith or with malicious intent.

905 **§ 63.2-1530. Virginia Child Protection Accountability System.**

906 A. The Virginia Child Protection Accountability System (the System) is created to collect and make
 907 available to the public information on the response to reported cases of child abuse and neglect in the
 908 Commonwealth. The Department shall establish and maintain the System. The Board shall promulgate
 909 regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

910 B. The following information shall, notwithstanding any state law regarding privacy or confidentiality of
 911 records, be included in the System and made available to the public via a website maintained by the
 912 Department and in print format:

913 1. From the Department: (i) the total number of complaints alleging child abuse, neglect, or a combination
 914 thereof received; (ii) the total number of complaints deemed valid pursuant to § 63.2-1508; (iii) the total
 915 number of complaints investigated by the Department pursuant to subsection ~~F~~ H of §§ § 63.2-1503 and §
 916 63.2-1505; (iv) the total number of cases determined to be founded cases of abuse or neglect; and (v) the total
 917 number of cases resulting in a finding that the complaint was founded resulting in administrative appeal.
 918 Information reported pursuant to clause (v) shall be reported by total number of appeals to the local
 919 department, total number of appeals to the Department, and total number of appeals by outcome of the
 920 appeal. For each category of information required by this subdivision, the Department shall also report the
 921 total number of cases by type of abuse; by gender, age, and race of the alleged victim; and by the nature of
 922 the relationship between the alleged victim and alleged abuser.

923 2. From the Department of State Police, annually, in a format approved by the Department of Social
 924 Services;: arrest and disposition statistics for violations of §§ 18.2-48, 18.2-61, 18.2-63, 18.2-64.1, 18.2-67.1,
 925 18.2-67.2, 18.2-67.3, 18.2-67.4, 18.2-355, 18.2-361, 18.2-366, 18.2-370 through 18.2-370.2, 18.2-371,
 926 18.2-371.1, 18.2-374.1, 18.2-374.1:1, 18.2-374.3, 18.2-387, and 40.1-103 for inclusion in the Child
 927 Protection Accountability System.

928 3. From every circuit court in the Commonwealth for which data is available through the statewide Case
 929 Management System: (i) the total number of (a) misdemeanor convictions appealed from the district court to
 930 the circuit court, (b) felony charges certified from the district court to the circuit court, and (c) charges
 931 brought by direct indictment in the circuit court that involve a violation of any Code section set forth in
 932 subdivision 2; (ii) the total number of cases appealed, certified, or transferred to the court or brought by direct
 933 indictment in the circuit court involving a violation of any Code section set forth in subdivision 2 that result
 934 in a trial, including the number of bench trials and the number of jury trials; and (iii) the total number of trials
 935 involving a violation of any Code section set forth in subdivision 2 resulting in (a) a plea agreement, (b)
 936 transfer to another court, (c) a finding of not guilty, (d) conviction on a lesser included offense, or (e)
 937 conviction on all charges, by type of trial.

938 4. From the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission: information on sentences imposed for offenses
 939 listed in subdivision 2, including (i) the name of the sentencing judge, (ii) the offense or offenses for which a
 940 sentence was imposed, (iii) the age of the victim and offender, (iv) the relationship between the victim and
 941 the offender, (v) the locality in which the offense occurred, (vi) the sentence imposed and the actual time
 942 served, (vii) whether the sentence was an upward or downward departure from the sentencing guidelines or
 943 within the sentencing guidelines, and (viii) the reasons given for the departure, if any, from the sentencing
 944 guidelines.

945 5. From the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia: information by locality
 946 on cases from the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts' Case Management System involving (i)
 947 children alleged to be abused or neglected, including (a) the number of petitions filed, (b) the number of cases
 948 in which an emergency removal order was issued, (c) the number of cases in which a preliminary removal
 949 order or a preliminary child protective order or both were issued at a preliminary hearing, and (e) the number
 950 of cases in which a preliminary child protective order or a child protective order was issued other than at a
 951 preliminary hearing; and (ii) family abuse cases, including (a) the number of family abuse emergency
 952 protective orders issued by magistrates and juvenile and domestic relations district courts pursuant to
 953 § 16.1-253.4, (b) the number of family abuse protective petitions filed, and (c) the number of family abuse
 954 protective orders issued pursuant to § 16.1-279.1.

956 Information required to be reported pursuant to subdivisions 1 through 5 shall be reported annually in a
 957 format approved by the Department of Social Services and aggregated by locality.

958 C. Data collected pursuant to subsection B shall be made available to the public on a website established
 959 and maintained by the Department and shall also be made readily available to the public in print format.
 960 Information included in the System shall be presented in such a manner that no individual identifying
 961 information shall be included.

962 **2. That § 63.2-1510 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.**

963 **3. That §§ 2.2-3803, 2.2-3815, 63.2-105, 63.2-1502, 63.2-1503, 63.2-1508, 63.2-1509, 63.2-1510.1,**
 964 **63.2-1512, and 63.2-1530 of the Code of Virginia, as created or amended by this act, shall become**
 965 **effective on July 1, 2027.**

966 **4. That Chapter 604 of the Acts of Assembly of 2017 is amended and reenacted as follows:**

967 § 1. That the State Board of Social Services (*the Board*) shall promulgate regulations that require local
 968 departments of social services to respond to valid reports and complaints alleging suspected abuse or neglect
 969 of a child under the age of ~~two~~ *three* within 24 hours of receiving such reports or complaints. *The Board shall*
 970 *promulgate regulations that require the Department of Social Services to determine the validity of complaints*
 971 *alleging suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of three and children under the age of 18 with*
 972 *disabilities as defined in § 22.1-213 of the Code of Virginia. The Board's initial adoption of regulations*
 973 *necessary to implement the provisions of this act shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act*
 974 *(§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia), except that the Board shall provide an opportunity for public*
 975 *comment on such regulations prior to adoption.*

976 **5. That the State Board of Social Services (the Board) shall promulgate regulations to implement the**
 977 **provisions of this act related to state oversight of social services pursuant to § 63.2-100 of the Code of**
 978 **Virginia, as amended by this act, and §§ 63.2-203.1 and 63.2-319.1 of the Code of Virginia, as created**
 979 **by this act. The Board's initial adoption of regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this act**
 980 **shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).**

981 **6. That the State Board of Social Services (the Board) shall promulgate regulations necessary to**
 982 **implement the provisions of this act related to centralized intake and validity determination by July 1,**
 983 **2027. The Board's initial adoption of such regulations shall be exempt from the provisions of the**
 984 **Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).**

985 **7. That the Department of Social Services (the Department) shall contract with a third party to conduct**
 986 **a comprehensive study and review of the screening process used for child protective services**
 987 **complaints across Virginia. Such third party shall review the application of the current process utilized**
 988 **by localities, including any differences in how the review process is applied, to screen reports of child**
 989 **abuse and neglect and shall report to the work group established pursuant to this enactment on**

990 individual locality data regarding screen out rates, duplicate calls, invalid complaints, anonymous
 991 reports, and reports from law enforcement. Such third party shall also identify best practices and
 992 make recommendations for the most effective and efficient system for intake. The Department shall
 993 convene a work group consisting of representatives from the Department, local departments of social
 994 services, the Office of the Children's Ombudsman, local law enforcement, relevant staff of the Senate
 995 Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Rehabilitation and Social Services and the House
 996 Committees on Appropriations and Health and Human Services, staff from the Department of
 997 Planning and Budget, and representatives from state and advocacy organizations to evaluate the study
 998 and recommendations of the third party. In addition, such work group shall consider the costs of the
 999 recommendations and options for implementation. The Department shall report on the best practices
 1000 and any recommendations from the third party and from the work group to the Governor and the
 1001 Chairs of the House Committees on Appropriations and Health and Human Services and the Senate
 1002 Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Rehabilitation and Social Services by December 1,
 1003 2026.

1004 8. That the Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall convene a Social Services Task Force (the
 1005 Task Force) to develop a comprehensive improvement plan to address changes needed within the
 1006 Department of Social Services (the Department) and the local departments of social services. The Task
 1007 Force shall include the Commissioner of the Department, members of the State Board of Social
 1008 Services, key Department staff, directors of local departments of social services, members of local
 1009 boards of social services, staff from the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations and the
 1010 House Committee on Appropriations, representatives of the Department of Planning and Budget, and
 1011 representatives of relevant advocacy organizations. The Task Force shall (i) review the eligibility and
 1012 administration of state-administered benefits, (ii) consider a more holistic approach to benefit
 1013 application and eligibility determinations for citizens of the Commonwealth, (iii) consider placement of
 1014 all potential eligible benefit applications on the CommonHelp platform, and (iv) consider ways to
 1015 improve the user experience for benefit recipients. The Department shall hire a third party to review
 1016 the current funding sources for child welfare and child protective services, benefits, administration,
 1017 operation, and the local match, as well as the funding methodology used to allocate administrative
 1018 funds. The Task Force and such third party shall consider improvements to benefits eligibility and
 1019 administration to reduce operational and administrative costs, improve efficiency, and modernize the
 1020 current application system. The Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall submit a report on
 1021 the recommendations of the Task Force, including a plan to enact such recommendations, to the
 1022 Governor and the Chairs of the House Committees on Appropriations and Health and Human Services
 1023 and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Rehabilitation and Social Services by
 1024 November 1, 2026.

1025 9. That the Department of Social Services (the Department) shall implement centralized intake
 1026 pursuant to the provisions of this act through a phased-in approach that gradually transitions all
 1027 intake responsibilities from local departments of social services to the Department beginning July 1,
 1028 2028, and concluding on July 1, 2030. The Commissioner of the Department shall have the authority to
 1029 designate when each local board of social services shall comply with the provisions of this act regarding
 1030 the phased-in implementation of centralized intake during such time period.

1031 10. That local departments of social services shall retain the authority to continue to administer all
 1032 components of the intake of complaints of child abuse and neglect, including taking complaints and
 1033 determining validity of such complaints, until July 1, 2028, or until such time as they are designated by
 1034 the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to be phased-in to centralized intake,
 1035 whichever is later. Upon a local department's inclusion in centralized intake or by July 1, 2030,
 1036 whichever is earlier, such local department shall no longer retain the authority to administer intake
 1037 and validity determinations and any authority temporarily granted pursuant to this act shall expire.