

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 16

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Senator Rose

[Introduced January 14, 2026; referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §49-2-802a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
2 relating to creating the Child Protection Investigations Reform Act; and requiring
3 notification to a person accused of child abuse or neglect of the person's rights in
4 connection with an investigation conducted by the Department of Human Services.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN.

§49-2-802a. Information to be provided at the outset of a child protective services

investigation **Child** **Protection** **Investigations** **Reform** **Act.**

1 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, immediately upon initiating an
2 investigation of a parent or other person having legal custody of a child, the department shall, upon
3 first contact with the individual, provide the individual with a copy of A Parent's Guide to Working
4 with Child Protective Services (Guide).

5 (b) The Guide shall include a short and plain statement to include, but not be limited to, the
6 following:

7 (1) Steps that the department will take to investigate signs of abuse and neglect;

8 (2) Steps that may need to be taken to make a safer or healthier home for the child;

9 (3) An overview of the court process;

10 (4) The confidentiality of maltreatment reports and case appeals;

11 (5) Child visitation; and

12 (6) Case appeals.

13 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of code to the contrary, immediately upon initiating

14 an investigation of a parent or other person having legal custody of a child, the department shall,
15 upon first contact with the person, provide to the person:

16 (1) A Summary that:

17 (A) Is brief and easily understood;

18 (B) Is written in a language that the person understands, or if the person is illiterate, is read

19 to the person in a language that the person understands; and

20 (C) Contains the following information:

21 (i) The department's procedures for conducting an investigation of alleged child abuse or

22 neglect, including: a description of the circumstances under which the department would request

23 to remove the child from the home through the judicial system; and an explanation that the law

24 requires the department to refer all reports of alleged child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement

25 agency for a separate determination of whether a criminal violation occurred;

26 (ii) The person's right to file a complaint with the department in the investigation;

27 (iii) The person's right to review all records of the investigation unless the review would

28 jeopardize an ongoing criminal investigation or the child's safety;

29 (iv) The person's right to seek legal counsel;

30 (v) References to the statutory and regulatory provisions governing child abuse and

31 neglect and how the person may obtain copies of those provisions;

32 (vi) The process the person may use to acquire access to the child if the child is removed

33 from the home; and

34 (vii) The rights listed under subdivision (2) of subsection (a):

35 (2) A verbal notification made in a language that the person understands that the Fourth

36 Amendment to the United States Constitution applies to the department, and protects the person,

37 and that the person has the right to:

38 (A) Exercise his or her right against self-incrimination and not speak with any agent of the

39 department without legal counsel present;

40 (B) Assistance by an attorney;

41 (C) Have court-appointed attorney if the person is indigent;

42 (D) Record any interaction or interview subject to disclosure to the department, law

43 enforcement, or another party under a court order;

44 (E) Refuse to allow the investigator to enter the home or interview the children without legal

45 counsel present;

46 (F) Withhold consent to the release of any medical or mental health records;

47 (G) Withhold consent to any medical or psychological examination of the child;

48 (H) Refuse to submit to a drug or urine test; and

49 (I) Consult with legal counsel prior to agreeing to any proposed voluntary safety plan; and

50 (3) A verbal or written summary made in a language that the person understands of the

51 allegations against the person, and whether they were made by an anonymous reporter.

52 (b) The department shall adopt a form for the purpose of verifying that the parent or other

53 person having legal custody of the child received the verbal notification and written summary

54 required by this section.

55 (c) The changes in law made by this section apply only to an investigation of a report of

56 child abuse or neglect that is made on or after the effective date of this section. An investigation of

57 a report of abuse or neglect made before the effective date of this section is governed by the law in

58 effect on the date the report was made, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

59 (d) This section takes effect on July 1, 2026.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the Child Protection Investigations Reform Act; and require notification to a person accused of child abuse or neglect of the person's rights in connection with an investigation conducted by the Department of Human Services.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.