

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 524

**INTERIM
BILL**

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Senators Deeds, Grady, M. Maynard, Roberts,
and, Tarr

[Introduced January 20, 2026; referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources;
and then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §49-2-131, relating to monthly status meetings of county entities; providing
3 legislative findings and intent; designating meeting participants; and requiring reporting.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILD WELFARE.

§49-2-131. County Bureau of Social Services monthly status meetings; participants; trainings; reports.

1 (a) (1) The Legislature finds that timely identification of issues affecting child welfare,
2 staffing, caseloads, and service delivery within each county Bureau of Social Services office is
3 essential to protecting the health and safety of children.

4 (2) The Legislature further finds that improved communication among state, county, law-
5 enforcement, education, health-care, and community partners enhances child protection
6 outcomes and ensures accountability.

7 (3) Accordingly, it is the intent of the Legislature to establish a structured monthly forum in
8 each county to review the status of the Bureau of Social Services, address inter-agency concerns,
9 and improve coordinated responses to child abuse and neglect.

10 (b) (1) Each county office of the Bureau of Social Services shall convene a monthly
11 meeting to review the operational status of the agency in that county.

12 (2) The meeting shall be chaired by the county Bureau of Social Services supervisor or his
13 or her designee.

14 (3) The Department of Human Services shall ensure compliance and may establish
15 standardized agendas, reporting templates, and procedures.

16 (c) The following officials or their designees shall be invited and encouraged to participate
17 in each monthly meeting:

18 (1) The Department of Human Services regional director or division representative;

19 (2) The county prosecuting attorney;

(3) The county sheriff;

(4) The county superintendent of schools;

(5) Members of the Legislature whose districts include any portion of the county;

(6) Members of the county commission;

(7) A representative of a local hospital or health-care facility;

(8) Representatives of local nonprofit organizations serving children and families; and

(9) Any other stakeholder determined appropriate by the Bureau of Social Services.

(d) The monthly meeting shall include, but is not limited to, review and discussion of:

(1) Current staffing levels, vacancies, and caseload trends;

(2) County child welfare metrics, including response times, open cases, and placement data;

(3) Cross-agency coordination issues, including law enforcement referrals, school reporting, and court interactions;

(4) Barriers to service delivery such as transportation, treatment access, provider shortages, or court delays;

(5) Status of children placed out of county or out of state;

(6) Emergent cases or systemic issues requiring coordinated intervention; and

(7) Any matters required by rule of the Department of Human Services.

(e) (1) The Department of Human Services shall ensure that at least annual training is provided in each county on:

(A) Standards for substantiation of child abuse and neglect, including evidentiary requirements;

(B) Mandatory reporting obligations; and

(C) Best practices for inter-agency coordination and protection of children.

(2) The Department may provide such training directly or through approved providers, and may deliver training in person or through virtual formats.

- 46 ~~(3) Counties may hold additional topic-specific trainings during monthly meetings.~~
- 47 ~~(f) (1) Each county Bureau of Social Services office shall prepare a brief summary report of~~
- 48 ~~each monthly meeting, to include:~~
- 49 ~~(A) An attendance list;~~
- 50 ~~(B) Key issues discussed;~~
- 51 ~~(C) Identified action items; and~~
- 52 ~~(D) Follow-up responsibilities.~~

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a structured monthly forum in each county to review the status of the Bureau of Social Services, address inter-agency concerns, and improve coordinated responses to child abuse and neglect.

The bill was recommended for introduction by the Joint Committee on Children and Families.

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