



HOUSE BILL 1144: Dominique Moody Safety Act.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Judiciary 2. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	June 8, 2026
Introduced by:	Reps. Cunningham, Chesser, Colvin, Lambeth	Prepared by:	Debbie Griffiths
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H1144-CSCI-54		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The PCS to House Bill 1144 would create and provide funding for a Child Welfare Escalation Team, require video or photographs to be taken by the social worker during the initial assessment, allow a director or their representative to enter a private residence to conduct an assessment when the Escalation Team has been activated, require training for child protective services employees and social workers on recognizing child abuse and neglect, and require the N.C. Department of Justice to provide recommendations for limiting or eliminating the State's liability when a county department of social services fails to follow statutory requirements or the State's policies and procedures in providing child welfare services.*

BILL ANALYSIS:

PART I. CHILD WELFARE ESCALATION TEAM

Sesction 1.(a). A Child Welfare Escalation Team would be created to assist counties with child welfare assessments when a report is received regarding the abuse or neglect of a high-risk juvenile. High risk juvenile would be defined as a juvenile living in a home or family that has an extensive child welfare history, has two or more screened out reports, has been involved in two or more assessments whether substantiated or unsubstantiated, has a history of a prior removal and placement of a child in foster care or kinship care. The Escalation Team would assess the child welfare history for the child and home, identify gaps in service that impact the child, review the overall safety planning for the child, and create a timeline for use in decision making. The Escalation Team would be involved in determining case decisions for the child and services needed for the child. The Escalation Team would be required to discuss any concerns with the involvement of child welfare services related to the child and family with the director and the assigned regional child welfare team.

Section 1.(b). A combination of State and federal funding would be appropriated for the creation of eight (8) full time positions for the creation of the Child Welfare Escalation Team to include five hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$550,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year, in addition to one hundred fifty-seven thousand dollars (\$157,000) in federal receipts beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Section 1.(c). The Division of Social Services would be required to explore means and resources needed to for counties to alert the Child Welfare Escalation Team.

Section 1.(d). The Division would be required to amend protocols and rules necessary for entry into a private residence when the Child Welfare Team has been activated.

Kara McCraw
Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578

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PART II. CPS EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT HOME VISIT AND RECORD MODIFICATIONS

Section 2.(a). The Division of Social Services would be required to update its rules, and policies and procedures to require that photographs or videos be taken by the social worker during an initial investigative or family assessment and that those photos and videos be maintained as a permanent part of the file.

Section 2.(b). G.S. 7B-302 would be amended to (i) require the custodian of criminal investigative records to show the court, by clear and convincing evidence, that providing documents requested by the Child Welfare Escalation Team would jeopardize a current or future prosecution of a defendant, and (ii) to allow the director or their representative to enter a private residence for assessment purposes when the Escalation Team has been activated and the report alleges abuse or neglect of a high risk juvenile.

PART III. RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TRAINING

Non-recurring funds in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) would be appropriated to train child protective services employees and social workers in recognizing abuse and neglect. The training would be required to be virtually available for future trainings, and for continuing education for employees.

PART IV. LIABILITY

The North Carolina Department of Justice would be required to make recommendations on limiting or eliminating the State's liability when a county department of social services fails to follow statutory requirements or State policies or procedures for the provision of child welfare services. The recommendations would be made to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal Research Division no later than March 1, 2027.

PART V. EFFECTIVE DATES Subsection (a) of Section 1 and Subsection (b) of Section 2 of this act become effective October 1, 2026. Subsection (b) of Section 1 and Section 3 of this act become effective July 1, 2026. The remainder of this act becomes effective when it becomes law.