

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 571

92ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR LOUDON.

Read 1st time February 24, 2003, and 1,000 copies ordered printed.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

1741S.011

AN ACT

To repeal sections 210.115 and 352.400, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof two new sections relating to Christian Science practitioners.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Sections 210.115 and 352.400, RSMo, are repealed and two new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 210.115 and 352.400, to read as follows:

210.115. 1. When any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, RSMo, [Christian Science practitioner,] peace officer or law enforcement official, or other person with responsibility for the care of children has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. As used in this section, the term "abuse" is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person.

2. Whenever such person is required to report pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183 in an official capacity as a staff member of a medical institution, school facility, or other agency,

EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

whether public or private, the person in charge or a designated agent shall be notified immediately. The person in charge or a designated agent shall then become responsible for immediately making or causing such report to be made to the division. Nothing in this section, however, is meant to preclude any person from reporting abuse or neglect.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of sections 210.109 to 210.183, any child who does not receive specified medical treatment by reason of the legitimate practice of the religious belief of the child's parents, guardian, or others legally responsible for the child, for that reason alone, shall not be found to be an abused or neglected child, and such parents, guardian or other persons legally responsible for the child shall not be entered into the central registry. However, the division may accept reports concerning such a child and may subsequently investigate or conduct a family assessment as a result of that report. Such an exception shall not limit the administrative or judicial authority of the state to ensure that medical services are provided to the child when the child's health requires it.

4. In addition to those persons and officials required to report actual or suspected abuse or neglect, any other person may report in accordance with sections 210.109 to 210.183 if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

5. Any person or official required to report pursuant to this section, including employees of the division, who has probable cause to suspect that a child who is or may be under the age of eighteen, who is eligible to receive a certificate of live birth, has died shall report that fact to the appropriate medical examiner or coroner. If, upon review of the circumstances and medical information, the medical examiner or coroner determines that the child died of natural causes while under medical care for an established natural disease, the coroner, medical examiner or physician shall notify the division of the child's death and that the child's attending physician shall be signing the death certificate. In all other cases, the medical examiner or coroner shall accept the report for investigation, shall immediately notify the division of the child's death as required in section 58.452, RSMo, and shall report the findings to the child fatality review panel established pursuant to section 210.192.

6. Any person or individual required to report may also report the suspicion of abuse or neglect to any law enforcement agency or juvenile office. Such report shall not, however, take the place of reporting or causing a report to be made to the division.

7. If an individual required to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect pursuant to this section has reason to believe that the victim of such abuse or neglect is a resident of another state or was injured as a result of an act which occurred in another state, the person required to report such abuse or neglect may, in lieu of reporting to the Missouri division of family services, make such a report to the child protection agency of the other state with the

authority to receive such reports pursuant to the laws of such other state. If such agency accepts the report, no report is required to be made, but may be made, to the Missouri division of family services.

352.400. 1. As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall mean:

(1) "Abuse", any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse, injury or harm to a child under circumstances required to be reported pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo;

(2) "Child", any person regardless of physical or mental condition, under eighteen years of age;

(3) "Minister", any person while practicing as a minister of the gospel, clergyperson, priest, rabbi, **Christian Science practitioner**, or other person serving in a similar capacity for any religious organization who is responsible for or who has supervisory authority over one who is responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child or has access to a child;

(4) "Neglect", failure to provide the proper or necessary support or services by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child, under circumstances required to be reported pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo;

(5) "Religious organization", any society, sect, persuasion, mission, church, parish, congregation, temple, convention or association of any of the foregoing, diocese or presbytery, or other organization, whether or not incorporated, that meets at more or less regular intervals for worship of a supreme being or higher power, or for mutual support or edification in piety or with respect to the idea that a minimum standard of behavior from the standpoint of overall morality is to be observed, or for the sharing of common religious bonds and convictions;

(6) "Report", the communication of an allegation of abuse or neglect pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo.

2. When a minister or agent designated pursuant to subsection 3 of this section has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect under circumstances required to be reported pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo, the minister or designated agent shall immediately report or cause a report to be made as provided in sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo, a minister shall not be required to report concerning a privileged communication made to him or her in his or her professional capacity.

3. A religious organization may designate an agent or agents required to report pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo, in an official capacity on behalf of the religious organization. In the event a minister, official or staff member of a religious organization has probable cause to believe that the child has been subjected to abuse or neglect under circumstances required to be reported pursuant to sections 210.109 to 213.183, RSMo, and the minister, official or staff member of the religious organization does not personally make a report pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo, the designated agent of the religious

organization shall be notified. The designated agent shall then become responsible for making or causing the report to be made pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183, RSMo. This section shall not preclude any person from reporting abuse or neglect as otherwise provided by law.

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