

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2011
TO: ALL HOUSE MEMBERS
FROM: REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE WILLIAMS BISHOP
SUBJECT: MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE

In an effort to better protect children, I plan to introduce legislation that amends the Child Protective Services Law to improve communication between the Department of Public Welfare and individuals who are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.

As you know, mandated reporters play a critical role in identifying child abuse and providing protective services to children. According to the latest state child abuse report, mandated reporters make up 77 percent of all referrals for *substantiated* child abuse reports---a statistic that has remained relatively constant for the past 10 years. In 2009, mandated reporters referred close to 19,000 reports of suspected child abuse, or about 75 percent of all suspected child abuse reports.

Under current law, a mandated reporter can receive information regarding the final status of the child abuse report and whether services were provided or arranged to protect the child. The bill ensures that this information is communicated to the mandated reporter within 30 days after a determination is made as to whether the child abuse report is substantiated or unfounded.

The bill also provides that a mandated reporter can request that DPW review the child abuse that was made by the reporter if a report is unfounded and if no services are planned or provided. DPW would review the case and notify the reporter of its findings.

According to the Child Protective Services Law, mandated reporters are individuals whose occupation or profession brings them into contact with children. They must report suspected child abuse if they have reason to suspect that a child has been abused who is under their care, supervision, guidance or training or that of an agency, institution organization or other entity with which the person is affiliated.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring this bill, please contact Heather in my office at 772-9901 (6487) as soon as possible.