

SUBJECT: Child Protection Legislation
FROM: Representative Kathy Watson

I am preparing to introduce legislation that would amend the Child Protective Services Law (Title 23, Chapter 63) to provide for the procedures to report suspected child abuse and for the cross reporting of child abuse between investigative agencies. This legislation is based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Child Protection. It is intended to ensure that reports of suspected abuse are not screened- out within an organization, and that reports are received and investigated by the proper authorities. My legislation would:

- Eliminate chain-of-command reporting, so that mandated reporters must report to Childline *and* within their organization.
- Clarify reporting procedures for mandated reporters and permissive reporters.
- Allow DPW to receive reports of suspected abuse by advanced communication technologies (the internet, etc.).
- Clarify when child welfare authorities or law enforcement investigate a report of suspected abuse, and when a joint investigation will be conducted.
- Clarify when child welfare authorities can become involved with an incident that occurred outside the Commonwealth.