



ILLINOIS SENATE BILL 378, Amendment 1 PROTECTING INNOCENT FAMILIES ACT

Ensuring Due Process & Transparency in Child Welfare

Senate Bill 378, Amendment 1 introduces vital reforms to address medically-based child abuse allegations and protect the rights of families within the child welfare system. By focusing on transparency, accountability, and due process, the bill targets systemic issues that disproportionately impact vulnerable families, especially families of color. It seeks to prevent unnecessary separations and harmful decisions stemming from medical misinterpretations. Key provisions include:

- **Right to Know:** Families must be informed when a child abuse pediatrician (CAP) or other contracted medical professionals are involved in a child's care as part of a DCFS investigation. This ensures transparency about who is assessing a child's health and safety and upholds families' right to understand the professionals influencing decisions about their child's well-being.
- **Right to a Second Opinion:** Families have the right to seek a second medical opinion when an initial diagnosis of abuse or neglect is made. This provision is essential in preventing wrongful removals based on misdiagnoses or hasty conclusions, particularly in cases involving children with complex medical conditions that may be incorrectly misinterpreted as being caused by abuse or neglect.
- **Enhanced Accountability through Data Collection:** The bill requires comprehensive data collection on child abuse investigations involving doctors contracted by DCFS. This provision strengthens oversight, ensuring more accurate and informed decision-making in abuse cases. It also helps to identify and address systemic issues, such as racial disproportionality, that often impact child welfare outcomes.

For more information:

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This bill does not affect medical providers responsible for diagnosing, treating, or caring for individuals, nor does it interfere with the obligations of mandated reporters. Additionally, it preserves current investigative procedures and does not impede contracted medical professionals from fulfilling their contractual duties.

Proponents of SB 378, Amendment 1:

- ACLU Illinois
- Ascend Justice
- Cabrini Green Legal Aid
- Center for Integrity in Forensic Sciences
- Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts
- Cook County Justice Advisory Council
- Family Justice Resource Center
- Greater West Town Community Development Project
- Holistic Birth Collective
- If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
- National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter
- Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative
- Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Illinois Prison Project Action Fund
- The James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy
- Legal Action Chicago
- Office of Cook County Public Defender
- ParentalRights.org
- Roll Call Organization
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- She Votes Illinois

