

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1873 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY McNEILL, KRAJEWSKI, ZIMMERMAN, WAXMAN, HILL-EVANS,
McANDREW, SANCHEZ, SALISBURY, CIRESI, BOYD, GAYDOS AND FRIEL,
SEPTEMBER 19, 2025

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, NOVEMBER 18, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses), 23 (Domestic
2 Relations) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the
3 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in offenses against the
4 family, further providing for the offense of endangering
5 welfare of children; in child protective services, further
6 providing for definitions and for exclusions from child
7 abuse; and, in juvenile matters, further providing for
8 definitions.

9 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
10 hereby enacts as follows:

11 Section 1. Section 4304(a)(1) and (2) of Title 18 of the
12 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes are amended and the section
13 is amended by adding a subsection to read:

14 § 4304. Endangering welfare of children.

15 (a) Offense defined.--

16 (1) [A] Except as provided in subsection (a.1), a
17 parent, guardian or other person supervising the welfare of a
18 child under 18 years of age, or a person that employs or
19 supervises such a person, commits an offense if he knowingly
20 endangers the welfare of the child by violating a duty of

1 care, protection or support.

2 (2) [A] Except as provided in subsection (a.1), a person
3 commits an offense if the person, in an official capacity,
4 prevents or interferes with the making of a report of
5 suspected child abuse under 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to
6 child protective services).

7 * * *

8 (a.1) Exceptions.--It shall not be considered an offense
9 under subsection (a) if:

10 (1) the conduct does not constitute abuse as defined in
11 23 Pa.C.S. § 6102 (relating to definitions); or

12 (2) the child is not a dependent child as defined in 42
13 Pa.C.S. § 6302 (relating to definitions).

14 * * *

15 Section 2. The definition of "serious physical neglect" in
16 section 6303(a) of Title 23 is amended to read:

17 § 6303. Definitions.

18 (a) General rule.--The following words and phrases when used
19 in this chapter shall have the meanings given to them in this
20 section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

21 * * *

22 "Serious physical neglect." Any of the following when
23 committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or
24 health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or
25 impairs a child's health, development or functioning:

26 (1) A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to
27 supervise a child in a manner that is [appropriate] necessary
28 considering the child's developmental age and abilities.

29 (2) The deliberate failure to provide a child with
30 [adequate] essentials of life, including food, shelter or

1 medical care.

2 * * *

3 Section 3. Section 6304 of Title 23 is amended by adding a
4 subsection to read:

5 § 6304. Exclusions from child abuse.

6 * * *

7 (d.1) Supervision and independent activities.--

8 (1) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to
9 restrict the rights of a parent to determine the level of
10 supervision given to a child in a manner that is appropriate
11 considering the child's development and abilities.

12 (2) A parent may permit a child of sufficient maturity
13 to engage in independent activities, including:

14 (i) Traveling to and from school, including walking,
15 running or bicycling.

16 (ii) Traveling to and from nearby commercial or
17 recreational facilities.

18 (iii) Engaging in outdoor play.

19 (iv) Notwithstanding 75 Pa.C.S. § 3701.1 (relating
20 to leaving an unattended child in a motor vehicle),
21 remaining in a vehicle unattended.

22 (v) Remaining at home or in a location unattended.

23 (vi) Providing care for younger siblings or family
24 members.

25 (vii) Engaging in a similar independent activity.

26 (3) A decision by a parent relating to supervision or
27 independent activities of a child under paragraph (2) shall
28 not constitute serious physical neglect, child abuse as
29 defined under section 6303 (relating to definitions) or an
30 offense under 18 Pa.C.S. § 4304 (relating to endangering

1 welfare of children), unless the parent willfully or
2 recklessly disregards an obvious A FORESEEABLE danger to the <--
3 child for which a reasonable and prudent parent would take
4 precautionary measures to prevent subjecting the child to an
5 unreasonable risk of serious harm.

6 * * *

7 Section 4. Paragraph (1) of the definition of "dependent
8 child" in section 6302 of Title 42 is amended to read:

9 § 6302. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter
11 shall have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
12 meanings given to them in this section:

13 * * *

14 "Dependent child." A child who:

15 (1) is without [proper] parental care or control,
16 subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or
17 control necessary for his physical, mental, or emotional
18 health[, or morals]. A determination that there is a lack of
19 [proper] parental care or control [may] shall be based upon
20 evidence of conduct by the parent, guardian or other
21 custodian that places the health, safety or welfare of the
22 child at [risk,] serious and likely risk of harm, including <--
23 evidence of the parent's, guardian's or other custodian's use
24 of alcohol or a controlled substance that places the health,
25 safety or welfare of the child at [risk;] serious and likely <--
26 risk of harm, but this paragraph shall not be construed to
27 restrict the rights of a parent to determine the level of
28 supervision given to a child in a manner that is appropriate
29 considering the child's development and abilities;

30 * * *

1 Section 5. All regulations and parts of regulations are
2 abrogated to the extent of any inconsistency with this act.

3 Section 6. This act shall take effect in 60 days.