WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
Regular Session, 2006

ENROLLED

SENATE BILL NO. 13

(By Senator Yoder, et al)

PASSED March 8, 2006

In Effect 90 days from Passage
AN ACT to amend and reenact §7-10-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend and reenact §9-6-9 of said code; to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §9-6-9a; to amend and reenact §48-27-702 of said code; to amend and reenact §49-6A-2 of said code; and to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §49-6A-2b, all relating to requiring cross-reporting among child protective service workers, adult protective service workers, law-enforcement officers and humane officers of suspected child abuse or neglect, suspected abuse or neglect of incapacitated or elderly adults, suspected animal cruelty or inhumane treatment or suspected domestic violence; and providing penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §7-10-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted; that §9-6-9 of said code be amended and reenacted; that said code be amended by adding thereto a
new section, designated §9-6-9a; that §48-27-702 of said code be amended and reenacted; that §49-6A-2 of said code be amended and reenacted; and that said code be amended by adding thereto a new section, designated §49-6A-2b, all to read as follows:

CHAPTER 7. COUNTY COMMISSIONS AND OFFICERS.

ARTICLE 10. HUMANE OFFICERS.

§7-10-2. Duty of humane officers; reporting requirement when abuse or neglect of individuals suspected; prohibition against interference with humane officers; penalties.

1 (a) It is the duty of humane officers to prevent the perpetration or continuance of any act of cruelty upon any animal and to investigate and, upon probable cause, to cause the arrest and assist in the prosecution of any person engaging in such cruel and forbidden practices. Upon reasonable cause, and as provided by law, such officers have the right to access and inspection of records and property as may be reasonably necessary to any investigation.

10 (b) Whenever a humane officer, pursuant to an investigation of animal cruelty, forms a reasonable suspicion that a minor child, or incapacitated or elderly person, is the victim of abuse or neglect or has a suspicion of domestic violence, he or she shall report the suspicion and the grounds therefor. In the event of suspected child abuse or neglect, the humane officer shall report to the local child protective services agency of the Department of Health and Human Resources in accordance with the provisions of section five, article six-a, chapter forty-nine of this code. In the event of suspected abuse or neglect of an incapacitated or elderly person, he or she shall report to the department’s local adult protective services agency in accordance with the provisions of section eleven, article six, chapter nine of this code. In the event of suspected domestic violence, he or she shall report to the State Police
in accordance with the provisions of article twenty-seven, chapter forty-eight of this code.

(c) Any person who interferes with, obstructs or resists any humane officer in the discharge of his or her duty is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than one hundred nor more than five hundred dollars or confined in jail not more than thirty days, or both fined and confined. Any penalties imposed for a violation of this subsection shall be imposed in addition to any penalties the person incurs for cruel or inhumane treatment of any animal.

CHAPTER 9. HUMAN SERVICES.

ARTICLE 6. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ADULTS.

§9-6-9. Mandatory reporting of incidences of abuse, neglect or emergency situation.

(a) If any medical, dental or mental health professional, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, social service worker, law-enforcement officer, humane officer, state or regional ombudsman or any employee of any nursing home or other residential facility has reasonable cause to believe that an incapacitated adult or facility resident is or has been neglected, abused or placed in an emergency situation, or if such person observes an incapacitated adult or facility resident being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse, neglect or an emergency situation, the person shall immediately report the circumstances pursuant to the provisions of section eleven of this article: Provided, That nothing in this article is intended to prevent individuals from reporting on their own behalf.

(b) In addition to those persons and officials specifically required to report situations involving suspected abuse or neglect of an incapacitated adult or facility resident or the existence of an emergency situation, any other person may make such a report.
The secretary shall develop a form for the filing of written complaints, as provided by section eleven of this article, and provide these forms to all nursing homes or other residential facilities, hospitals, ombudsmen and adult protective service agencies in this state. The forms shall be designed to protect the identity of the complainant, if desired, and to facilitate the prompt filing of complaints.

§9-6-9a. Mandatory reporting suspected of animal cruelty by adult protective service workers.

In the event an adult protective service worker, in response to a report mandated by section nine of this article, forms a reasonable suspicion that an animal is the victim of cruel or inhumane treatment, he or she shall report the suspicion and the basis therefor to the county humane officer provided under section one, article ten, chapter seven of this code within twenty-four hours of the response to the report.

CHAPTER 48. DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

ARTICLE 27. PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

§48-27-702. Law-enforcement officers to provide information, transportation and to report suspicions of animal cruelty.

(a) Any law-enforcement officer responding to an alleged incident of domestic violence shall inform the parties of the availability of the possible remedies provided by this article and the possible applicability of the criminal laws of this state. Any law-enforcement officer investigating an alleged incident of domestic violence shall advise the victim of such violence of the availability of the family protection shelter to which such person may be admitted.

(b) If there is reasonable cause to believe that a person is a victim of domestic violence or is likely to be a victim of domestic violence, a law-enforcement officer responding
to an alleged incident of domestic violence shall, in addition to providing the information required in subsec-
tion (a) of this section, provide transportation for or facilitate transportation of the victim, upon the request of such victim, to a shelter or an appropriate court.

(c) Whenever a law-enforcement officer, pursuant to a response to an alleged incident of domestic violence, forms a reasonable suspicion that an animal is a victim of cruel or inhumane treatment, he or she shall report the suspicion and the grounds therefor to the county humane officer within twenty-four hours of the response to the alleged incident of domestic violence.

CHAPTER 49. CHILD WELFARE.

ARTICLE 6A. REPORTS OF CHILDREN SUSPECTED TO BE ABUSED OR NEGLECTED.

§49-6A-2. Persons mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect.

When any medical, dental or mental health professional, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, school teacher or other school personnel, social service worker, child care or foster care worker, emergency medical services personnel, peace officer or law-enforcement official, humane officer, member of the clergy, circuit court judge, family court judge, employee of the Division of Juvenile Services or magistrate has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused or observes the child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect, such person shall immediately, and not more than forty-eight hours after suspecting this abuse, report the circumstances or cause a report to be made to the Department of Health and Human Resources: Provided, That in any case where the reporter believes that the child suffered serious physical abuse or sexual abuse or sexual assault, the reporter shall also immediately report, or cause a report to be made, to the State Police
and any law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint: *Provided, however,* That any person required to report under this article who is a member of the staff of a public or private institution, school, facility or agency shall immediately notify the person in charge of such institution, school, facility or agency, or a designated agent thereof, who shall report or cause a report to be made. However, nothing in this article is intended to prevent individuals from reporting on their own behalf.

In addition to those persons and officials specifically required to report situations involving suspected abuse or neglect of children, any other person may make a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected in a home or institution or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

§49-6A-2b. Mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty by child protective service workers.

In the event a child protective service worker, in response to a report mandated by section two of this article, forms a reasonable suspicion that an animal is the victim of cruel or inhumane treatment, he or she shall report the suspicion and the basis therefor to the county humane officer provided under section one, article ten, chapter seven of this code within twenty-four hours of the response to the report.
The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

In effect ninety days from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker House of Delegates

The within is approved this the 22nd Day of March 2006.

Governor
PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

MAR 17 2006

Time 11:10 am