



# SENATE BILL 280: Dominique Moody Act.

2025-2026 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	House Judiciary 2. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	June 16, 2026
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Jarvis, B. Newton, Overcash	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Debbie Griffiths
<b>Analysis of:</b>	PCS to Third Edition S280-CSCI-57		Staff Attorney

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**OVERVIEW:** *The PCS to Senate Bill 280 would create a Child Welfare Escalation Team, require video or photographs to be taken by the social worker during the initial assessment, allow a director or their representative to enter a private residence to conduct an assessment when the Escalation Team has been activated, require training for child protective services employees and social workers on recognizing child abuse and neglect, and require the N.C. Department of Justice to provide recommendations for reducing the State's liability and requiring some liability by a county when a county department of social services fails to follow statutory requirements or the State's policies and procedures in providing child welfare services, require the appointment of a guardian ad litem for any parent under the age of 16 in a proceeding for the termination of their parental rights and would permit the appointment for a parent who is 16 or 17 years old, prohibit the department from placing the juvenile in an unlicensed facility or a facility not licensed to provide care to juveniles without court approval contained in a court order, include the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in the Child Advocacy Center process, and make various clarifying and conforming changes.*

## PCS ANALYSIS:

### PART I. CHILD WELFARE ESCALATION TEAM

**Section 1.(a).** A Child Welfare Escalation Team would be created to assist counties with child welfare assessments when a report is received regarding the abuse or neglect of a juvenile in a high-risk home. A high risk home would be defined as a home or family that has an extensive child welfare history, has two or more screened out reports, has been involved in two or more assessments whether substantiated or unsubstantiated, has a history of a prior removal and placement of a child in foster care or kinship care. The Escalation Team would assess the child welfare history for the child and home, identify gaps in service that impact the child, review the overall safety planning for the child, and create a timeline for use in decision making. The Escalation Team would be involved in determining case decisions for the child and services needed for the child. The Escalation Team would be required to discuss any concerns with the involvement of child welfare services related to the child and family with the director and the assigned regional child welfare team.

**Section 1.(b).** Eight (8) full-time positions would be created to establish the Child Welfare Escalation Team such that there would be an escalation specialist for each of the seven (7) social services regions and one supervisor for the escalation team.

**Section 1.(c) and (d).** The Division of Social Services would be required to explore means and resources needed for counties to alert the Child Welfare Escalation Team. The Division would also be required to

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amend protocols and rules necessary for entry into a private residence when the Child Welfare Escalation Team has been activated.

## **PART II. CPS EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT HOME VISIT AND RECORD MODIFICATIONS**

**Section 2.(a).** The Division of Social Services would be required to update its rules, and policies and procedures to require that photographs or videos be taken by the social worker during an initial investigative or family assessment and that those photos and videos be maintained as a permanent part of the file.

**Section 2.(b).** G.S. 7B-302 would be amended to (i) require the custodian of criminal investigative records to show the court, by clear and convincing evidence, that providing documents requested by the Child Welfare Escalation Team would jeopardize a current or future prosecution of a defendant, and (ii) to allow the director or their representative to enter a private residence for assessment purposes when the Child Welfare Escalation Team has been activated and the report alleges abuse or neglect of a juvenile in a high risk home.

## **PART III. RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TRAINING**

The North Carolina Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services (the Division) would be required to create a training program for child protective services employees and social workers in recognizing abuse and neglect. The training would be required to be virtually available for future trainings, and for continuing education for employees.

## **PART IV. LIABILITY**

The North Carolina Department of Justice would be required to make recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services no later than March 1, 2027 on reducing the State's liability and placing some liability on a county when the county department of social services fails to follow statutory requirements or State policies or procedures for the provision of child welfare services.

## **PART V. PROCEDURE FOR EXPUNGEMENT FROM RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS LIST**

G.S. 7B-200(a)(9) would be amended to clarify that the court has jurisdiction over proceedings involving placement on or expungement from the responsible individuals list and G.S. 7B-325(b) would be amended to clarify that the petition for expungement be served on the director who identified the individual seeking expungement.

## **PART VI. CLARIFY CHILD WELFARE PROCEDURE**

G.S. 7B-900.1(b) and (d), G.S. 7B-903.1(c1), G.S. 7B-906.1, G.S. 7B-906.2(b), G.S. 7B-908(c), G.S. 7B-909.2(h), and G.S. 7B-909.3(e) would be amended to make clarifying or conforming changes consistent with S.L. 2025-16 (HB612) including clarification that a party to an order modifying, terminating, or enforcing a post adoption contact agreement and order may not appeal that order unless it is an order holding a party in contempt.

## **PART VII. TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

G.S. 7B-1101.1(b) would be amended to require the appointment of a guardian ad litem for any parent under the age of 16 in a proceeding for the termination of their parental rights and would permit the appointment for a parent who is 16 or 17 years old.

G.S. 7B-1103(a) would be amended to clarify that a county department of social services, consolidated human services agency, or licensed child placing agency may file a petition to terminate parental rights

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when a child is relinquished to them by a parent or when an infant is surrendered under the safe surrender statute.

## **PART VIII. UNDISCIPLINED AND DELINQUENT JUVENILES; NONSECURE CUSTODY**

G.S. 7B-1905(a) would be amended to prohibit the department from placing the juvenile in an unlicensed facility or a facility not licensed to provide care to juveniles without court approval contained in a court order.

## **PART IX. INCLUSION OF EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS IN CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS**

G.S. 108A-77.1(7) and (10) and G.S. 108A-77.4(c) would be amended to include the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in the Child Advocacy Center process.

## **PART X. EFFECTIVE DATES**

Subsection (a) of Section 1, Subsection (b) of Section 2, and Part VI of this act become effective October 1, 2026. The remainder of this act becomes effective when it becomes law.