

SUBJECT: Child Protection Legislation  
FROM: Rep. Todd Stephens

I believe that we all have a moral obligation to protect the children of Pennsylvania by reporting suspected child abuse but under the current child protective services law, some individuals with whom we entrust our children on a regular basis, are legally mandated to report suspected child abuse. After reviewing the recommendations of the Joint State Government Commission Task Force on Child Protection regarding mandated reporters, I plan to introduce legislation which will comprehensively amend the mandated reporting section of the child protective services statute. This legislation will provide:

- The reporting of suspected child abuse by a person who comes in contact with a child based on his/her employment, occupation or practice of a profession OR based on his/her affiliation with an agency, institution, organization or other entity (including a school or regularly established religious organization) directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of that child;
- An expanded and enumerated list of mandated reporters;
- Requires employees of mandated reporters to report the suspected child abuse directly to the Department of Public Welfare AND the employee's supervisor;
- Encourages everyone to report suspected child abuse;
- Provides for posting of signs with a telephone number for employees at business establishments associated with photo processing or repair of computers to aid in identifying and encouraging reporting of suspected child abuse; and
- Penalties for failure to report.

This legislation will help protect Pennsylvania's children by updating and clarifying the current law for mandated reporters.