



## Fiscal Note

### Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

## HB 26-1234: ACCESS TO RECORDS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

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**Prime Sponsors:**

Rep. Rydin; Soper

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**Date:** March 11, 2026

**Fiscal note status:** This fiscal note represents the introduced bill.

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### Summary Information

**Overview.** The bill changes who may access and disclose child abuse and neglect records.

**Types of impacts.** The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Minimal State Workload
- Local Government

**Appropriations.** No appropriation is required.

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**Table 1**  
**State Fiscal Impacts**

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

## Summary of Legislation

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This bill clarifies that identifying information in reports or records of child abuse or neglect are confidential and must not be released to persons not permitted by statute to access them. The bill clarifies who may access the records by adding attorneys representing alleged abused or neglect children, and assigned designees of the child if they present a valid release of information.

The bill permits a person who was named in a report or record as an alleged abused or neglect child, or their attorney or guardian ad litem with their consent, to disclose and use the record, including for litigation or to obtain treatment or services. County department of human services are required to establish and submit to the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) a formal process for current and former clients to access their own case records.

In addition, the bill makes several changes to criminal offenses involving unauthorized release of records. First, the bill repeals existing criminal offenses for improperly releasing child abuse or neglect records, a class 2 misdemeanor, including when such a release occurs in various education-related settings. Second, while unauthorized release of certain records in education-related settings is generally prohibited under current law, the associated misdemeanor offense and penalty, as codified in Section 24-72-206, C.R.S., was repealed by [Senate Bill 17-040](#). This bill restores the criminal penalty for these offenses as an unclassified misdemeanor subject to a sentence of up to 90 days in county jail and a fine of up to \$100.

## Comparable Crime Analysis

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Legislative Council Staff is required to include certain analysis in the fiscal note for any bill that creates a new crime, or that either reclassifies or creates a new factual basis for an existing crime. This section identifies comparable crimes and discusses assumptions on future conviction rates resulting from the bill.

### Prior Conviction Data and Assumptions

The bill changes the repeals certain offenses related to unauthorized release of records related to child abuse and neglect, a class 2 misdemeanor, and restores more general criminal offenses for improperly releasing certain records in various education settings as class 2 misdemeanor. From FY 2022-23 to FY 2024-25, zero offenders have been sentenced and convicted for any of the offenses affected by the bill. Therefore, the fiscal note assumes that there will continue to be minimal or no additional criminal case finings or convictions for this offense under the bill. Because the bill is not expected to have a tangible impact on criminal justice related revenue or expenditures at the state or local levels, these potential impacts are not discussed further in this fiscal note. Visit the [Fiscal Notes website](#) for more information about criminal justice costs in fiscal notes.

## State Expenditures

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The bill minimally increases workload to the CDHS to receive counties' process for submitting records and to provide any guidance to counties. This workload can be accomplished within existing resources.

## Local Government

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Counties may need to develop or update their policies for clients to access their case records. The workload associated with this will vary depending on whether a county already has an established policy in place. Counties with established policies will have a minimal workload impacts to update their policies and submit them to the CDHS; counties that need to develop formal policies will have greater workload to develop and submit their policies.

## Effective Date

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The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

## State and Local Government Contacts

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Child Welfare	Human Services
Counties	Information Technology
Education	Judicial