



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

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### **Child Protection Legislation Led by Senate Democrats Passes the Senate**

**CONCORD** - Today, the Senate passed HB 1162, an omnibus child protection bill. HB 1162 next goes to the House of Representatives for a concurrence vote, which requires a simple majority.

**After the vote, Senate Judiciary Chair Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover) issued the following statement:**

“As a state, we have given very public attention to the health and economic impacts of the coronavirus. However, as the state reopens we will be faced with a public health crisis that has been forced to remain quiet, the protection and welfare of our children. For children living in abusive homes, the loss of their classroom experience, after school programs, and community centers, meant that their pathways to disclose abuse were either partially or completely eliminated. To disclose abuse away from the home is painful, to try and disclose behind closed doors is a nearly impossible challenge.

As lawmakers, we must do everything in our power to protect our children. This means advocating for the resources our children need to be safe and successful including clarifying our provisions on adoption to ensure more loving homes for New Hampshire children, enhancing the Office of the Child Advocate, and putting critical health and safety programs in place for children exposed to substance use disorder, neglect, and abuse.”

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### **On Background:**

- HB 1162 includes text from the following bills:
  - SB 295 *relative to the office of the child advocate*
  - HB 1657 *relative to reimbursement of court-ordered services for juveniles*
  - HB 1249 *relative to the legal representation of children in the juvenile justice system*
  - HB 377 *relative to the best interests of the child under the child protection act*
  - HB 1162 *relative to adoption and parentage*
  - HB 1233 *relative to coverage for children's early intervention services*

- HB 1707 *expanding the family-centered early supports and services (FCESS) program to children under the age of 3 who are born substance-exposed*
- SB 541 *relative to the child abuse and neglect central registry*
- HB 1637 *establishing a kinship navigator program in the department of health and human services.*
- HB 1597 *relative to dispositional hearings under RSA 169-B*
- SB 643 *relative to missing children*