



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

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### **House Sends Child Protection Legislation to Governor's Desk**

**CONCORD** - Today, the New Hampshire House of Representatives voted to concur with the Senate recommendation of Ought to Pass as Amended on HB 1162, an omnibus child protection bill, 209-119. HB 1162 will next be enrolled with the Secretary of State's office and then go to the governor's desk, at which time he will have five days to act.

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

"Our children have suffered alongside us through the coronavirus pandemic. The loss of in person education, after school programs, sports, and social gatherings has created an isolation that our children are bravely navigating. For children living in abusive homes, the loss of in person experiences outside of the home meant that their pathways to disclose abuse were either partially or completely eliminated.

As Legislators, we are charged to work in the best interest of the state. HB 1162 takes that mission to heart and makes significant advances to protect our children including advocating for the resources our children need to be safe and successful, 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. Our children have been brave, it is time we do the same; I urge Governor Sununu to sign this bill."

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### **On Background:**

- HB 1162 as amended contains texts 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
- SB 549 relative to the rebuttable presumption of harm under the child protection act