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SPONSOR STATEMENT

CSSB 171(JUD) Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDT)

An MDT is a group of professionals that play a part in a child abuse case that work together as a group to coordinate intervention and to reduce potential trauma and improve services to Alaskan children and families.

The Alaskan Children's Justice Act Task Force requested this legislation to clarify there are child abuse cases that may not involve the Office of Children's Services (OCS) and the law is gray on whether or not a multidisciplinary team can function under state statute without the involvement of OCS.

An example would be a case in which one parent sexually abused a child and the other parent discovers the situation, reports the sexual abuse, removes the child from physical contact of the other parent, and the offending parent is arrested.

MDT's do conduct such investigations currently but there is some disagreement about whether or not this is occurring within the boundaries of the law. SB 171 takes uncertainty away.

MDT's don't just work as a group with criminal investigations. They form the nucleus of a work group for Child in Need of Aid cases that require case plans to provide counseling, training, medical care, and parenting skills to reunite families and make them whole. The Team meets monthly, reviews the progress and makes recommendations to improve services to Alaskan children and families.