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### **New Jersey Non-Profit Pushes for a Federal Mandatory Reporting Law to Report Child Abuse**

MONMOUTH JUNCTION, NJ – A New Jersey non-profit is petitioning Congress to pass a federal mandatory reporting law requiring all citizens to report child abuse and neglect.

Foster and Adoptive Family Services, a non-profit that works in conjunction with the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), has created an online petition urging the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to create legislation similar to that which exists in NJ that would require any person who suspects a child is at risk of abuse or neglect to report it immediately to an appropriate state agency.

“There is nothing more important than protecting children from abuse and neglect,” Foster and Adoptive Family Services’ CEO Mary Jane Awrachow said. “Our vision is a world where all children are living in safe, stable and nurturing homes, and no child is the victim of abuse or neglect. We are proud that New Jersey is a leader as a mandatory reporting state but we worry about children throughout this country. We believe a child’s safety shouldn’t depend on what state they live in.”

According to the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association, there are approximately 1,900 children that become victims of abuse or neglect every day in the United States.

There are 18 states, including NJ, that already have mandatory reporting requirements. Other states have mandatory reporting requirements only for those in professions where they come in contact with children.

If a person suspects child abuse or neglect in NJ, they call 1-877 NJ ABUSE, a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week hotline run by the State Central Registry (SCR). A screener takes the call, records the necessary information, and codes the information using the Allegation Based Protocol (APB). APB provides an outline for abuse and/ or neglect for all calls ranging from bites and lock outs to death.

Calls that raise an allegation or allegations of abuse and/or neglect are coded as CPS (Child Protective Service). These calls are coded as immediate response or 24-hour response. This is a call where the concern is raised to a level of abuse and neglect and is sent to the local office for investigation. The family is to comply with the Division as per NJ Statute Title 9.

Foster and Adoptive Family Services has provided support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families in NJ for more than 40 years. For more information, visit [www.fafsonline.org](http://www.fafsonline.org).

For more information about New Jersey's law, visit <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/reporting/links/>.