

Introduced by

Representative Rios

(Approved by the Delayed Bills Committee)

1 A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Management to consider studying the feasibility  
2 of establishing mandatory reporting requirements for public officials, an investigative body for  
3 allegations of child exploitation and abuse involving public officials, and severe penalties for  
4 public officials who engage in, enable, or conceal child exploitation.

5 **WHEREAS**, the protection of children and vulnerable populations is a fundamental  
6 responsibility of government; and

7 **WHEREAS**, individuals entrusted with positions of leadership and authority bear a greater  
8 responsibility to uphold justice and protect the vulnerable, as noted in Luke 12:48, "From  
9 everyone who has been given so much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has  
10 been entrusted with much, much more will be asked"; and

11 **WHEREAS**, child exploitation, abuse, and trafficking are among the most heinous crimes,  
12 as noted in Matthew 18:6, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me,  
13 it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in  
14 the depth of the sea"; and

15 **WHEREAS**, a public official who participates in, enables, or knowingly conceals child  
16 exploitation has betrayed his or her oath of office, contributed to the destruction of innocent  
17 lives, and allowed evil to thrive under the protection of power and privilege; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the concealment of and participation in child exploitation within governmental  
19 institutions represents a severe breach of duty that demands heightened accountability,  
20 including criminal penalties and permanent removal from public service;

21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF**  
22 **NORTH DAKOTA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:**

23 That the Legislative Management consider studying the feasibility of establishing mandatory  
24 reporting requirements for public officials, an investigative body for allegations of child

1 exploitation and abuse involving public officials, and severe penalties for public officials who  
2 engage in, enable, or conceal child exploitation; and

3 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the study include an examination of the implementation  
4 of investigative and oversight measures, including the feasibility of the creation of a Special  
5 Investigation Task Force within the Attorney General's office with the powers to investigate  
6 allegations of child exploitation or abuse involving public officials, and a comprehensive review  
7 of legislative powers in other states to assess whether similar powers should be adopted in this  
8 state to address corruption, criminal conduct, or concealment of child exploitation; and

9 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the study include an examination of accountability  
10 measures, including consideration of statutory changes to establish penalties and mandatory  
11 minimum sentences for public officials found to have participated in or concealed child  
12 exploitation, facilitated ongoing abuse, or retaliated against individuals for reporting such  
13 offenses; and additional penalties for such offenses, including removal from office, forfeiture of  
14 retirement benefits, and permanent disqualification from holding public office; and

15 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the study include strategies to ensure the safety and  
16 confidentiality of victims, witnesses, and whistleblowers; and

17 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the study include an assessment of the financial and  
18 administrative impacts of any reforms; and

19 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Management engage with stakeholders,  
20 including child welfare organizations, law enforcement agencies, the Department of Health and  
21 Human Services, the Attorney General's office, victim advocacy groups, legal experts on ethics  
22 and government accountability, individuals with experience investigating child exploitation  
23 cases, and experts in criminal sentencing, public corruption law, and legislative oversight; and

24 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Management report its findings and  
25 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to  
26 the Seventieth Legislative Assembly.