

THIRD PARTY CHILD ABUSE REPORTING IN MISSOURI SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS, In Missouri, one of every four children experiences abuse of some kind, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or verbal abuse, medical neglect and educational neglect; and
- WHEREAS, The Missouri Division of Family Services offers protection by law from civil liability to any individual who reports child abuse or suspected child abuse to them, unless that person filed a false report, acted in bad faith, or acted with ill intent; and
- WHEREAS, Under current Missouri law when suspected abuse of a student by a school employee is reported to a school administrator by a third party, the third party reporter may be held civilly liable for actions of the school administration toward that employee; and
- WHEREAS, Under current Missouri law, a third party who observes a school employee abusing a student or suspects a school employee of abusing a student during school hours or school-sponsored activities may choose not to report such behavior to school administrators out of fear of serious legal and financial consequences; and
- WHEREAS, If a school employee's actual or suspected abuse of a student(s) is not reported to school administration, the abuse may continue or escalate; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, its units and councils, support legislation that gives **immunity from civil liability for any action taken by school authorities as a result of a third party making a report to a school administrator of child abuse by a school employee, unless that person filed a false report, acted in bad faith, or acted with ill intent; and be it further**
- RESOLVED, That the Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, its units and councils, collaborate with school districts to: promote awareness of child abuse; create usable and efficient abuse reporting procedures and policies; make such procedures and policies known and available within their districts; and protect and support a third party who notifies school administration of a school employee's abuse or suspected abuse of a student during school hours or school-sponsored activities.