Department of Planning and Budget
2018 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB1721

House of Origin	☒	Introduced	☐	Substitute	☐ Engrossed
Second House	☐	In Committee	☐	Substitute	☐ Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Gooditis

3. **Committee:** Courts of Justice

4. **Title:** Child abuse and neglect; mandatory reporters.

5. **Summary:** Adds to the list of persons who are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect ministers, priests, rabbis, imams, and duly accredited practitioners of any religious organization or denomination usually referred to as a church; however, the bill exempts such clergy members from the mandatory reporting requirement when the information supporting the suspicion of child abuse or neglect (i) is required by the doctrine of the religious organization or denomination to be kept confidential or (ii) would be subject to the exemptions set forth in § 8.01-400 or 19.2-271.3 if offered as evidence in court.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary**: Yes.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary. See Item 8.

7a. Expenditure Impact:

Fiscal Year	*Dollars*	*Fund*
2019	-	-
2020	$142,264	general
2021	$142,264	general
2022	$142,264	general
2023	$142,264	general
2024	$142,264	general
2025	$142,264	general

* There is an annual local match increase of $26,096.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** This legislation would add accredited practitioners of any religious organization to the enumerated list of mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect while maintaining religious privilege.

In FY 2018, clergy reported 94 referrals of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and local departments of social services (LDSS). This was less than 0.1 percent of the total number of Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals received by the state and local agencies. This legislation will require hundreds, if not thousands, of new individuals to become mandatory reporters. However, the bill

maintains religious privilege, which means that not all suspicions of child abuse and neglect will require a mandatory report. While it is unknown how many more referrals will result from this legislation, for purposes of this analysis it is estimated that the number of referrals will double and an additional 94 referrals will need to be investigated by LDSS staff.

In FY 2018, the Department received 104,812 CPS referrals. Of those referrals, 57,299, or 55 percent, led to involvement by local staff. Assuming the number of CPS referrals increases by 94, and 55 percent of those referrals result in either a Family Assessment or CPS investigation, 52 (94 x 55%) new assessments or investigations will be initiated as a result of this bill.

Considering all of the requirements to respond to a valid referral, the Department of Social Services estimates that each CPS assessment or investigation requires an average of 50 hours of work. Therefore, 2,600 (52 cases x 50 hours) additional local staff hours will be required to validate these reports. Given 1,500 productive hours per local staff annually, the equivalent of two (2,600/1,500) additional local full time equivalent staff is required. The average annual cost, including salary, benefits, and nonpersonal services of employing a local CPS worker is $84,180, for a total estimated annual cost of $168,360. Based on the assumptions above, every 94 new referrals that result from this bill will increase costs by this amount.

There are no unobligated federal funding sources available to the Department of Social Services for CPS activities; consequently, general fund in the amount of $142,264 and a 15.5 percent local match of $26,096 will be needed each year.

9. **Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Social Services, local departments of social services

10. **Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

11. **Other Comments:** None.