



## **Byron Pugh Legal Addresses Tennessee's Tougher Child Abuse Penalties Under New Legislation**

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Byron Pugh Legal, a Nashville-based criminal defense firm, is providing critical guidance to defendants facing charges under Tennessee's recently enacted legislation that significantly increases penalties for certain child abuse offenses. House Bill 0045 reclassifies specific types of child abuse from misdemeanor offenses to Class E felonies, marking a substantial shift in how these cases are prosecuted and sentenced throughout the state.

The legislative change represents a fundamental transformation in Tennessee's approach to child abuse cases. Previously charged as misdemeanors, certain child abuse offenses now carry the weight of felony convictions, including potential prison sentences ranging from one to six years and fines up to \$3,000. Beyond immediate penalties, defendants face the prospect of permanent felony records that can affect employment opportunities, housing applications, professional licensing, and civil rights including voting and firearm ownership.

Byron Pugh Legal criminal defense team has observed an immediate impact on case strategies since the law's implementation. The firm notes that defendants who might have previously faced probation or minimal

jail time for misdemeanor charges now confront the possibility of state prison sentences and lifelong consequences associated with felony convictions.

"The reclassification of these offenses fundamentally changes the defense landscape for anyone accused of child abuse in Tennessee," stated Byron Pugh, founder and lead attorney at Byron Pugh Legal. "What was once a misdemeanor charge that might result in probation or county jail time has become a felony prosecution with state prison exposure. This legislative change means defendants need comprehensive legal strategies from the moment charges are filed or even suspected."

The new legislation affects various forms of child abuse allegations, though specific acts reclassified as felonies depend on factors including the age of the alleged victim, the nature of the alleged abuse, and whether serious bodily injury occurred. Tennessee prosecutors now have enhanced tools to pursue more severe charges in cases they determine warrant felony prosecution.

For individuals facing these enhanced charges, the importance of securing a skilled domestic assault defense attorney has become paramount. The complexity of defending against felony charges requires extensive knowledge of Tennessee criminal law, experience with felony trial procedures, and understanding of sentencing guidelines that differ substantially from misdemeanor cases.

The firm emphasizes that early intervention in these cases can significantly impact outcomes. Pre-indictment negotiations, thorough investigation of allegations, and strategic defense planning become even more critical when felony charges are at stake. Additionally, the collateral consequences of a felony conviction extend far beyond the courtroom, affecting family relationships, custody arrangements, and professional opportunities for years to come.

"Defendants need to understand that the stakes have fundamentally changed under this new law," added Pugh. "The difference between a misdemeanor and felony conviction affects every aspect of a person's future. Early legal representation allows us to investigate thoroughly, preserve evidence, and develop defense strategies before charges are formally filed."

Byron Pugh Legal specializes in criminal defense throughout Middle Tennessee, with particular expertise in domestic violence and assault cases. The firm, led by former Nashville prosecutor Byron L. Pugh, provides comprehensive defense services including pre-charge intervention, trial representation, and post-conviction relief.

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For more information about Byron Pugh Legal, contact the company here:[Byron Pugh Legal](#)Byron

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## **Byron Pugh Legal**

*Byron Pugh Legal offers expert criminal defense and family law services in Middle Tennessee, providing personalized attention and strategic advocacy to protect clients' rights.*

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