

CHAPTER 558 — S.F.No. 1809

An act relating to crimes; providing for the protection of the victims of criminal sexual conduct and intrafamilial sexual abuse; classifying data; specifying the competency of witnesses; amending Minnesota Statutes 1981 Supplement, Sections 15.791, Subdivision 9; and 595.02; proposing new law coded in Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 15 and 631.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 1981 Supplement, Section 15.791, Subdivision 9, is amended to read:

Subd. 9. **PROTECTION OF IDENTITIES.** A law enforcement agency may withhold public access to data on individuals to protect the identity of individuals in the following circumstances:

(a) When access to the data would reveal the identity of an undercover law enforcement officer;

(b) When access to the data would reveal the identity of a victim of criminal sexual conduct or intrafamilial sexual abuse or of a violation of section 617.246, subdivision 2;

(c) When access to the data would reveal the identity of a paid or unpaid informant being used by the agency if the agency reasonably determines that revealing the identity of the informant would threaten the personal safety of the informant; or

(d) When access to the data would reveal the identity of a victim of or witness to a crime if the victim or witness specifically requests that his identity not be revealed, and the agency reasonably determines that revealing the identity of the victim or witness would threaten the personal safety or property of the individual.

Sec. 2. **[15.811] SEXUAL ASSAULT DATA.**

Subdivision 1. DEFINITIONS. (a) "Community based program" means any office, institution, or center offering assistance to victims of sexual assault and their families through crisis intervention, medical, and legal accompaniment and subsequent counseling.

(b) "Sexual assault counselor" means a person who has undergone at least 40 hours of crisis counseling training and works under the direction of a supervisor in a crisis center, whose primary purpose is the rendering of advice, counseling, or assistance to victims of sexual assault.

(c) "Victim" means a person who consults a sexual assault counselor for the purpose of securing advice, counseling, or assistance concerning a mental, physical, or emotional condition caused by a sexual assault.

Changes or additions are indicated by underline, deletions by ~~strikeout~~.

(d) "Sexual assault communication data" means all information transmitted in confidence between a victim of sexual assault and a sexual assault counselor and all other information received by the sexual assault counselor in the course of providing assistance to the victim. The victim shall be deemed the subject of sexual assault communication data.

Subd. 2. CLASSIFICATION. All sexual assault communication data is classified as private data on individuals.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 1981 Supplement, Section 595.02, is amended to read:

595.02 COMPETENCY OF WITNESSES.

Every person of sufficient understanding, including a party, may testify in any action or proceeding, civil or criminal, in court or before any person who has authority to receive evidence, except as follows:

(1) A husband cannot be examined for or against his wife without her consent, nor a wife for or against her husband without his consent, nor can either, during the marriage or afterwards, without the consent of the other, be examined as to any communication made by one to the other during the marriage. This exception does not apply to a civil action or proceeding by one against the other, nor to a criminal action or proceeding for a crime committed by one against the other or against a child of either, nor to a criminal action or proceeding in which one is charged with homicide or an attempt to commit homicide and the date of the marriage of the defendant is subsequent to the date of the offense, nor to an action or proceeding for non-support, neglect, dependency, or termination of parental rights;

(2) An attorney cannot, without the consent of his client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him or his advice given thereon in the course of professional duty; nor can any employee of the attorney be examined as to the communication or advice, without the client's consent;

(3) A clergyman or other minister of any religion shall not, without the consent of the party making the confession, be allowed to disclose a confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of the religious body to which he belongs; nor shall a clergyman or other minister of any religion be examined as to any communication made to him by any person seeking religious or spiritual advice, aid, or comfort or his advice given thereon in the course of his professional character, without the consent of the person;

(4) A licensed physician or surgeon, dentist, or chiropractor shall not, without the consent of his patient, be allowed to disclose any information or any opinion based thereon which he acquired in attending the patient in a professional capacity, and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity; after the

Changes or additions are indicated by underline, deletions by ~~strikeout~~.

decease of the patient, in an action to recover insurance benefits, where the insurance has been in existence two years or more, the beneficiaries shall be deemed to be the personal representatives of the deceased person for the purpose of waiving this privilege, and no oral or written waiver of the privilege shall have any binding force or effect except when made upon the trial or examination where the evidence is offered or received;

(5) A public officer shall not be allowed to disclose communications made to him in official confidence when the public interest would suffer by the disclosure;

(6) Persons of unsound mind; persons intoxicated at the time of their production for examination, and children under ten years of age, who appear incapable of receiving just impressions of the facts respecting which they are examined, or of relating them truly, are not competent witnesses. This exception does not apply to a child under ten years of age, in a criminal proceeding for intrafamilial sexual abuse as defined in section 609.364, subdivision 10, or in a criminal proceeding under sections 609.342 clause (a), 609.343 clause (a), 609.344 clause (a), or 609.345 clause (a), who is able to describe or relate in language appropriate for a child of that age the events or facts respecting which the child is examined;

(7) A registered nurse, psychologist or consulting psychologist shall not, without the consent of his client, be allowed to disclose any information or opinion based thereon which he acquired in attending the client in a professional capacity, and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity;

(8) An interpreter for a person handicapped in communication shall not, without the consent of the person, be allowed to disclose any communication if the communication would, if the interpreter were not present, be privileged. For purposes of this section, a "person handicapped in communication" means a person who, because of a hearing, speech or other communication disorder, or because of the inability to speak or comprehend the English language, is unable to understand the proceedings in which he is required to participate. The presence of an interpreter as an aid to communication does not destroy an otherwise existing privilege;

(9) A parent or his minor child may not be examined as to any communication made in confidence by the minor to his parent. A communication is confidential if made out of the presence of persons not members of the child's immediate family living in the same household. This exception may be waived by express consent to disclosure by a parent entitled to claim the privilege or by the child who made the communication, or by failure of the child or parent to object when the contents of a communication are demanded. This exception does not apply to a civil action or proceeding by one spouse against the other or by a parent or child against the other, nor to a proceeding to commit either the child or parent to whom the communication was made or to place the person or

property or either under the control of another because of his alleged mental or physical condition, nor to a criminal action or proceeding in which the parent is charged with a crime committed against the person or property of the communicating child, the parent's spouse, or a child of either the parent or the parent's spouse, or in which a child is charged with a crime or act of delinquency committed against the person or property of a parent or a child of a parent, nor to an action or proceeding for termination of parental rights, nor any other action or proceeding on a petition alleging child abuse, child neglect, abandonment or nonsupport by a parent;

(10) Sexual assault counselors may not be compelled to testify about any opinion or information received from or about the victim without the consent of the victim. However, a counselor may be compelled to identify or disclose information in investigations or proceedings related to neglect or termination of parental rights if the court determines good cause exists. In determining whether to compel disclosure, the court shall weigh the public interest and need for disclosure against the effect on the victim, the treatment relationship, and the treatment services if disclosure occurs. Nothing in this clause exempts sexual assault counselors from compliance with the provisions of sections 626.556 and 626.557.

"Sexual assault counselor" for the purpose of this section means a person who has undergone at least 40 hours of crisis counseling training and works under the direction of a supervisor in a crisis center, whose primary purpose is to render advice, counseling or assistance to victims of sexual assault.

Sec. 4. [631.045] EXCLUSION OF SPECTATORS FROM COURTROOM.

At the trial of a complaint or indictment for a violation of sections 609.341 to 609.3644, or 617.246, subdivision 2, where a minor under 18 years of age is the person upon, with, or against whom the crime is alleged to have been committed, the judge may exclude the public from the courtroom during the testimony of the victim or during all or part of the remainder of the trial upon a showing that closure is necessary to protect a witness or ensure fairness in the trial. Opportunity shall be provided for the prosecutor, defendant and members of the public to object to the closure prior to any closure order. The judge shall specify the reasons for closure in any order closing all or part of the trial. Upon closure the judge shall only admit persons who have a direct interest in the case.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Sections 1, 2, and 4 are effective the day following final enactment. Section 3 is effective August 1, 1982 and applies to court proceedings commenced on and after that date.

Approved March 22, 1982

Changes or additions are indicated by underline, deletions by ~~strikeout~~.