



AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN; CREATING THE OFFENSE OF GROOMING OF A CHILD FOR A SEXUAL OFFENSE; REVISING CERTAIN CRIMES TO INCLUDE A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHOM THE OFFENDER BELIEVED TO BE A CHILD; REVISING THE OFFENSE OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN TO INCLUDE COMPUTER-GENERATED CHILD PORNOGRAPHY; ADDING THE OFFENSE OF GROOMING OF A CHILD FOR A SEXUAL OFFENSE TO THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL OFFENSE; AMENDING SECTIONS 45-5-504, 45-5-601, 45-5-625, 45-5-711, 45-8-201, 46-23-502, AND 46-23-509, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

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

Section 1. Grooming of child for sexual offense. (1) A person commits the offense of grooming of a child for a sexual offense if the person purposely or knowingly engages in a pattern of grooming behavior by ~~any means of communication~~, including in-person or electronic communication, aimed at a child or the child's guardian with the intent to:

- (a) manipulate the child into engaging in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;
 - (b) coerce or entice a child under 16 years of age to meet in person to engage in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;
 - (c) distribute or facilitate access to sexually explicit material; or
 - (d) exploit a position of authority to develop an intimate or secretive relationship with a minor.
- (2) (a) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b) or subsection (3), a person convicted of the offense of grooming of a child for a sexual offense shall be imprisoned in the state prison for a term not to exceed 10 years and may be fined not more than \$10,000.

(b) If the victim is under 16 years of age, a person convicted of the offense of grooming of a child for a sexual offense shall be punished by life imprisonment or by imprisonment in the state prison for a term of

not less than 4 years or more than 100 years and may be fined not more than \$10,000.

(3) (a) If the victim was 12 years of age or younger and the offender was 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense, the offender:

(i) shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for a term of 100 years. The court may not suspend execution or defer imposition of the first 25 years of a sentence of imprisonment imposed under this subsection (3)(a)(i) except as provided in 46-18-222(1) through (5), and during the first 25 years of imprisonment, the offender is not eligible for parole. The exception provided in 46-18-222(6) does not apply.

(ii) may be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000; and

(iii) shall be ordered to enroll in and successfully complete the educational phase and the cognitive and behavioral phase of a sexual offender treatment program provided or approved by the department of corrections.

(b) If the offender is released after the mandatory minimum period of imprisonment, the offender is subject to supervision by the department of corrections for the remainder of the offender's life and shall participate in the program for continuous, satellite-based monitoring provided for in 46-23-1010.

(4) As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Electronic communication" means a sign, a signal, writing, an image, a sound, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted or created in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or photo-optical system.

(b) "Grooming" means behavior that seeks to prepare, induce, or persuade a minor to engage in sexual activity or other forms of exploitation, even if no meeting or sexual act is completed. It is the deliberate act of establishing an emotional connection with a minor through manipulation, trust-building, or influence to facilitate future sexual abuse or exploitation. This includes online or in-person activities, use of third parties, or indirect methods to facilitate the manipulation of a child.

(c) "Sexual conduct" means:

(i) actual or simulated:

(A) sexual intercourse, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex, as defined in 1-1-201;

(B) penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object, except when done as part of a recognized

medical procedure;

- (C) bestiality;
- (D) masturbation;
- (E) sadomasochistic abuse;
- (F) lewd exhibition of the genitals, breasts, pubic or rectal area, or other intimate parts of a person;

or

(G) defecation or urination for the purpose of the sexual stimulation of the viewer; or
(ii) the depiction or observation of a child in the nude or in a state of partial undress with the purpose to abuse, humiliate, harass, or degrade the child or to arouse or gratify the person's own sexual response or desire or the sexual response or desire of any person.

(d) "Simulated" means any depiction of the genitals or pubic or rectal area that gives the appearance of sexual conduct or incipient sexual conduct.

Section 2. Section 45-5-504, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-5-504. Indecent exposure. (1) A person commits the offense of indecent exposure if the person knowingly or purposely exposes the person's genitals or intimate parts by any means, including electronic communication as defined in 45-5-625(5)(a), under circumstances in which the person knows the conduct is likely to cause affront or alarm in order to:

- (a) abuse, humiliate, harass, or degrade another; or
- (b) arouse or gratify the person's own sexual response or desire or the sexual response or desire of any person.

(2) (a) A person convicted of the offense of indecent exposure shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$500 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term of not more than 6 months, or both.

(b) On a second conviction, the person shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term of not more than 1 year, or both.

(c) On a third or subsequent conviction, the person shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$10,000 or be imprisoned in a state prison for a term of not more than 10 years, or both.

(3) (a) A person commits the offense of indecent exposure to a minor if the person commits an

offense under subsection (1) and the person knows the conduct will be observed by a person who is under 16 years of age or a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child who is under 16 years of age and the offender is more than 4 years older than the victim or purported victim.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of indecent exposure to a minor shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000 or be imprisoned in the state prison for a term of not less than 4 years, unless the judge makes a written finding that there is good cause to impose a term of less than 4 years and imposes a term of less than 4 years, or more than 100 years, or both."

Section 3. Section 45-5-601, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-5-601. Prostitution -- patronizing prostitute -- exception. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2)(a), the offense of prostitution is committed if a person engages in or agrees or offers to engage in sexual intercourse or sexual contact that is direct and not through clothing with another person for compensation, whether the compensation is received or to be received or paid or to be paid.

(2) (a) A prostitute may be convicted of prostitution only if the prostitute engages in or agrees or offers to engage in sexual intercourse with another person for compensation, whether the compensation is received or to be received or paid or to be paid. A prostitute who is convicted of prostitution may be fined an amount not to exceed \$500 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 6 months, or both.

(b) A patron may be convicted of patronizing a prostitute if the patron engages in or agrees or offers to engage in sexual intercourse or sexual contact that is direct and not through clothing with another person for compensation, whether the compensation is received or to be received or paid or to be paid. Except as provided in subsection (3), a patron who is convicted of prostitution shall for the first offense be fined an amount not to exceed \$5,000 or be imprisoned for a term not to exceed 5 years, or both, and for a second or subsequent offense shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$10,000 or be imprisoned for a term not to exceed 10 years, or both.

(3) (a) If the person patronized was a child, whether or not the patron was aware of the child's age, or a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the patron believed was a child and the patron was 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense, ~~whether or not the~~

~~patron was aware of the child's age,~~ the patron offender:

(i) shall be punished by imprisonment in a state prison for a term of 100 years. The court may not suspend execution or defer imposition of the first 25 years of a sentence of imprisonment imposed under this subsection (3)(a)(i) except as provided in 46-18-222, and during the first 25 years of imprisonment, the offender is not eligible for parole.

(ii) may be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000; and

(iii) shall be ordered to enroll in and successfully complete the educational phase and the cognitive and behavioral phase of a sexual offender treatment program provided or approved by the department of corrections.

(b) If the offender is released after the mandatory minimum period of imprisonment, the offender is subject to supervision by the department of corrections for the remainder of the offender's life and shall participate in the program for continuous, satellite-based monitoring provided for in 46-23-1010.

(4) It is not a violation of this section for a person with an impaired physical ability, physical dysfunction, recent injury, or other disability to engage in sex therapy with a partner surrogate who is working under the supervision of a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or clinical professional counselor licensed under Title 37, chapter 39.

(5) It is not a defense in a prosecution under this section that a child consented to engage in sexual activity.

(6) It is not a defense in a prosecution under this section that a defendant believed the child was an adult. Absolute liability, as provided in 45-2-104, is imposed."

Section 4. Section 45-5-625, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-5-625. Sexual abuse of children. (1) A person commits the offense of sexual abuse of children if the person:

(a) knowingly employs, uses, or permits the employment or use of a child in an exhibition of sexual conduct, actual or simulated;

(b) knowingly photographs, films, videotapes, develops or duplicates the photographs, films, or videotapes, or records a child engaging in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;

(c) knowingly, by any means of communication, including electronic communication or in person, persuades, entices, counsels, coerces, encourages, directs, or procures a child under 16 years of age or a ~~person~~ a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child under 16 years of age to engage in sexual conduct, actual or simulated, or to view sexually explicit material or acts for the purpose of inducing or persuading a child to participate in any sexual activity that is illegal;

(d) knowingly processes, develops, prints, publishes, transports, distributes, sells, exhibits, or advertises any visual or print medium, including a medium by use of electronic communication in which a child is engaged in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;

(e) knowingly possesses any visual or print medium, including a medium by use of electronic communication or any computer-generated child pornography in which a child is engaged in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;

(f) finances any of the activities described in subsections (1)(a) through (1)(d) and (1)(g), knowing that the activity is of the nature described in those subsections;

(g) possesses with intent to sell any visual or print medium, including a medium by use of electronic communication in which a child is engaged in sexual conduct, actual or simulated;

(h) knowingly travels within, from, or to this state with the intention of meeting a child under 16 years of age or ~~a person~~ a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child under 16 years of age in order to engage in sexual conduct, actual or simulated; ~~or~~

(i) knowingly coerces, entices, persuades, arranges for, or facilitates a child under 16 years of age or a ~~person, including a person~~ law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child under 16 years of age to travel within, from, or to this state with the intention of engaging in sexual conduct, actual or simulated; or

(j) knowingly threatens to release, exhibit, or distribute any image or video of a child engaging in sexual conduct, actual or simulated, in order to compel the child to provide additional images or videos of a child engaging in sexual conduct, obtain any item of value, or coerce a child to commit or facilitate any crime.

(2) (a) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b), (2)(c), or (4), a person convicted of the offense of

sexual abuse of children shall be punished by life imprisonment or by imprisonment in the state prison for a term not to exceed 100 years and may be fined not more than \$10,000.

(b) Except as provided in 46-18-219, if the victim is under 16 years of age or is a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child under 16 years of age, a person convicted of the offense of sexual abuse of children shall be punished by life imprisonment or by imprisonment in the state prison for a term of not less than 4 years or more than 100 years and may be fined not more than \$10,000.

(c) Except as provided in 46-18-219, a person convicted of the offense of sexual abuse of children for the possession of material, as provided in subsection (1)(e), shall be fined not to exceed \$10,000 or be imprisoned in the state prison for a term not to exceed 10 years, or both.

(3) An offense is not committed under subsections (1)(d) through (1)(g) if the visual or print medium is processed, developed, printed, published, transported, distributed, sold, possessed, or possessed with intent to sell, or if the activity is financed, as part of a sexual offender information or treatment course or program conducted or approved by the department of corrections.

(4) (a) If the victim was 12 years of age or younger or is a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believed to be 12 years of age or younger and the offender was 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense, the offender:

(i) shall be punished by imprisonment in a state prison for a term of 100 years. The court may not suspend execution or defer imposition of the first 25 years of a sentence of imprisonment imposed under this subsection (4)(a)(i) except as provided in 46-18-222(1) through (5), and during the first 25 years of imprisonment, the offender is not eligible for parole. The exception provided in 46-18-222(6) does not apply.

(ii) may be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000; and

(iii) shall be ordered to enroll in and successfully complete the educational phase and the cognitive and behavioral phase of a sexual offender treatment program provided or approved by the department of corrections.

(b) If the offender is released after the mandatory minimum period of imprisonment, the offender is subject to supervision by the department of corrections for the remainder of the offender's life and shall participate in the program for continuous, satellite-based monitoring provided for in 46-23-1010.

(5) It is not a defense to prosecution under this section that the perceived child is an adult or law enforcement officer.

~~(5)~~(6) As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Computer-generated child pornography" means any visual depiction of:

(i) an actual minor that has been created, adapted, or modified to portray that minor engaged in prohibited sexual conduct;

(ii) an actual adult that has been created, adapted, or modified to portray that adult as a minor engaged in prohibited sexual conduct; or

(iii) an individual indistinguishable from an actual minor created by the use of artificial intelligence or other computer technology capable of processing and interpreting specific data inputs to portray that individual as a minor engaged in prohibited sexual conduct.

~~(a)~~(b) "Electronic communication" means a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted or created in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or photo-optical system.

(c) "Indistinguishable", when used with respect to a visual depiction, means virtually indistinguishable, in that the visual depiction is such that an ordinary person viewing the visual depiction would conclude that the visual depiction is of an actual minor engaged in prohibited sexual conduct.

~~(b)~~(d) "Sexual conduct" means:

(i) actual or simulated:

(A) sexual intercourse, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex, as defined in 1-1-201;

(B) penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object, except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure;

(C) bestiality;

(D) masturbation;

(E) sadomasochistic abuse;

(F) lewd exhibition of the genitals, breasts, pubic or rectal area, or other intimate parts of any person; or

- (G) defecation or urination for the purpose of the sexual stimulation of the viewer; or
- (ii) depiction or observation of a child in the nude or in a state of partial undress with the purpose to abuse, humiliate, harass, or degrade the child or to arouse or gratify the person's own sexual response or desire or the sexual response or desire of any person.

~~(e)~~(e) "Simulated" means any depicting of the genitals or pubic or rectal area that gives the appearance of sexual conduct or incipient sexual conduct.

~~(d)~~(f) "Visual medium" means:

- (i) any film, photograph, videotape, negative, slide, or photographic reproduction that contains or incorporates in any manner any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide; or
- (ii) any disk, diskette, or other physical media that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen by telephone line, cable, satellite transmission, or other method."

Section 5. Section 45-5-711, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-5-711. Child sex trafficking. (1) A person commits the offense of child sex trafficking by purposely or knowingly:

- (a) committing the offense of sex trafficking with a child; or
- (b) recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, receiving, providing, obtaining, isolating, maintaining, enticing, or using a child, or in the case of recruiting or enticing, a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be a child, for the purposes of commercial sexual activity.

(2) (a) A person convicted of the offense of child sex trafficking shall be imprisoned in the state prison for a term of 100 years. The court may not suspend execution or defer imposition of the first 25 years of a sentence of imprisonment imposed under this subsection (2)(a) except as provided in 46-18-222(1) through (4). During the first 25 years of imprisonment, the offender is not eligible for parole. The exceptions provided in 46-18-222(5) and (6) do not apply.

- (b) In addition to the sentence of imprisonment imposed under subsection (2)(a), the offender:
 - (i) must be fined in the amount of \$400,000; and

(ii) if released after the mandatory minimum period of imprisonment, is subject to supervision by the department of corrections for the remainder of the offender's life and shall participate in the program for continuous, satellite-based monitoring provided for in 46-23-1010.

(3) It is not a defense in a prosecution under this section:

(a) that a child consented to engage in commercial sexual activity; or

(b) that the defendant believed the child was an adult. Absolute liability, as provided in 45-2-104, is imposed."

Section 6. Section 45-8-201, MCA, is amended to read:

"45-8-201. Obscenity. (1) A person commits the offense of obscenity when, with knowledge of the obscene nature of the material, the person purposely or knowingly:

(a) sells, delivers, or provides or offers or agrees to sell, deliver, or provide any obscene writing, picture, record, or other representation or embodiment of the obscene to anyone under 18 years of age or a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be under 18 years of age;

(b) presents or directs an obscene play, dance, or other performance, or participates in that portion of the performance that makes it obscene, to anyone under 18 years of age;

(c) publishes, exhibits, or otherwise makes available anything obscene to anyone under 18 years of age;

(d) performs an obscene act or otherwise presents an obscene exhibition of the person's body to anyone under 18 years of age;

(e) creates, buys, procures, or possesses obscene matter or material with the purpose to disseminate it to anyone under 18 years of age or a person, including a law enforcement officer using an undercover or fictitious identity, whom the offender believes to be under 18 years of age; or

(f) advertises or otherwise promotes the sale of obscene material or materials represented or held out by the person to be obscene.

(2) A thing is obscene if:

(a) (i) it is a representation or description of perverted ultimate sexual acts, actual or simulated;

- (ii) it is a patently offensive representation or description of normal ultimate sexual acts, actual or simulated; or
 - (iii) it is a patently offensive representation or description of masturbation, excretory functions, or lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- (b) taken as a whole the material:
 - (i) applying contemporary community standards, appeals to the prurient interest in sex;
 - (ii) portrays conduct described in subsection (2)(a)(i), (2)(a)(ii), or (2)(a)(iii) in a patently offensive way; and
 - (iii) lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
- (3) In any prosecution for an offense under this section, evidence is admissible to show:
 - (a) the predominant appeal of the material and what effect, if any, it would probably have on the behavior of people;
 - (b) the artistic, literary, scientific, educational, or other merits of the material;
 - (c) the degree of public acceptance of the material in the community;
 - (d) the appeal to prurient interest or absence of that appeal in advertising or other promotion of the material; or
 - (e) the purpose of the author, creator, publisher, or disseminator.
 - (4) A person convicted of obscenity shall be fined at least \$500 but not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 6 months, or both.
 - (5) Cities, towns, counties, or school districts may adopt ordinances, resolutions, or policies that are more restrictive as to obscenity than the provisions of this section."

Section 7. Section 46-23-502, MCA, is amended to read:

"46-23-502. Definitions. As used in Title 45, chapter 5, part 3 and parts 5 through 7, 46-18-255, and this part, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Department" means the department of corrections provided for in 2-15-2301.
- (2) "Foreign offenses" means a conviction for a sexual offense involving any of the conduct listed in this section that was obtained under the laws of Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand, or

under the laws of any foreign country when the United States department of state, in its country reports on human rights practices, has concluded that an independent judiciary generally or vigorously enforced the right to a fair trial in that country during the year in which the conviction was obtained.

(3) "Mental abnormality" means a congenital or acquired condition that affects the mental, emotional, or volitional capacity of a person in a manner that predisposes the person to the commission of one or more sexual offenses to a degree that makes the person a menace to the health and safety of other persons.

(4) "Municipality" means an entity that has incorporated as a city or town.

(5) "Personality disorder" means a personality disorder as defined in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders adopted by the American psychiatric association.

(6) "Predatory sexual offense" means a sexual offense committed against a stranger or against a person with whom a relationship has been established or furthered for the primary purpose of victimization.

(7) "Registration agency" means:

(a) if the offender resides in a municipality, the police department of that municipality; or

(b) if the offender resides in a place other than a municipality, the sheriff's office of the county in which the offender resides.

(8) (a) "Residence" means the location at which a person regularly resides, regardless of the number of days or nights spent at that location, that can be located by a street address, including a house, apartment building, motel, hotel, or recreational or other vehicle.

(b) The term does not mean a homeless shelter.

(9) "Sexual offender evaluator" means a person qualified under rules established by the department to conduct psychosexual evaluations of sexual offenders and sexually violent predators.

(10) (a) "Sexual offense" means any violation, attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit a violation, or flight after the attempt or commission of the following:

(i) 45-5-301, unlawful restraint, if the victim is less than 18 years of age and the offender is not a parent of the victim;

(ii) 45-5-302, kidnapping, if the victim is less than 18 years of age and the offender is not a parent of the victim;

(iii) 45-5-303, aggravated kidnapping, if the victim is less than 18 years of age and the offender is

not a parent of the victim;

- (iv) 45-5-502(2)(c), (3), and (4), sexual assault;
- (v) 45-5-503, sexual intercourse without consent;
- (vi) 45-5-504(2)(c) and (3), indecent exposure;
- (vii) 45-5-507, incest, if the victim is less than 18 years of age and the offender is 3 or more years

older than the victim, or if the victim is 12 years of age or younger and the offender is 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense;

- (viii) 45-5-508, aggravated sexual intercourse without consent;
- (ix) 45-5-601(2)(b) and (3), prostitution;
- (x) 45-5-622(2)(b)(ii), endangering the welfare of children;
- (xi) 45-5-625, sexual abuse of children;
- (xii) 45-5-627(1)(a), ritual abuse of a minor;
- (xiii) 45-5-705, patronizing a victim of sex trafficking;
- (xiv) 45-5-706, aggravated sex trafficking;
- (xv) 45-5-711, child sex trafficking;
- (xvi) 45-8-218, deviate sexual conduct; or
- (xvii) [section 1], grooming of a child for a sexual offense; or

~~(xvii)~~(xviii) any violation of a law of another state, a tribal government, the federal government, or the military or a foreign entity that is reasonably equivalent to a violation listed in subsections (10)(a)(i) through (10)(a)(~~xvi~~)-(10)(a)(xvii) or for which the offender was required to register as a sexual offender after an adjudication or conviction.

(b) The term does not include the exceptions provided for in 45-5-501, 45-5-502, and 45-5-503.

(11) "Sexual or violent offender" means a person who has been convicted of or, in youth court, found to have committed or been adjudicated for a sexual or violent offense.

(12) "Sexually violent predator" means a person who:

(a) has been convicted of or, in youth court, found to have committed or been adjudicated for a sexual offense and who suffers from a mental abnormality or a personality disorder that makes the person likely to engage in predatory sexual offenses; or

(b) has been convicted of a sexual offense against a victim 12 years of age or younger and the offender is 18 years of age or older.

(13) "Transient" means an offender who has no residence.

(14) "Violent offense" means:

(a) any violation of or attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit a violation of:

(i) 45-5-102, deliberate homicide;

(ii) 45-5-103, mitigated deliberate homicide;

(iii) 45-5-202, aggravated assault;

(iv) 45-5-206 (third or subsequent offense), partner or family member assault;

(v) 45-5-210(1)(b), (1)(c), or (1)(d), assault on a peace officer or judicial officer;

(vi) 45-5-212, assault on a minor;

(vii) 45-5-213, assault with a weapon;

(viii) 45-5-215, strangulation of a partner or family member;

(ix) 45-5-302 (if the victim is not a minor), kidnapping;

(x) 45-5-303 (if the victim is not a minor), aggravated kidnapping;

(xi) 45-5-401, robbery;

(xii) 45-6-103, arson; or

(xiii) 45-9-132, operation of unlawful clandestine laboratory; or

(b) any violation of a law of another state, a tribal government, the federal government, or the military or a foreign entity reasonably equivalent to a violation listed in subsection (14)(a)."

Section 8. Section 46-23-509, MCA, is amended to read:

"46-23-509. Psychosexual evaluations and sexual offender designations. (1) Prior to sentencing of a person convicted of a sexual offense, a sexual offender evaluator who has a license endorsement as provided for in 37-1-139 shall provide the court with a psychosexual evaluation report recommending one of the following levels of designation for the offender:

(a) level 1, the risk of a repeat sexual offense is low;

(b) level 2, the risk of a repeat sexual offense is moderate;

(c) level 3, the risk of a repeat sexual offense is high, there is a threat to public safety, and the sexual offender evaluator believes that the offender is a sexually violent predator.

(2) Upon sentencing the offender, the court shall:

(a) review the psychosexual evaluation report, any statement by a victim, and any statement by the offender;

(b) designate the offender as level 1, 2, or 3; and

(c) designate a level 3 offender as a sexually violent predator.

(3) An offender designated as a level 2 offender or given a level designation by another state, the federal government, or the department under subsection (5) that is determined by the court to be similar to level 2 may petition the sentencing court or the district court for the judicial district in which the offender resides to change the offender's designation if the offender has enrolled in and successfully completed the treatment phase of either the prison's sexual offender treatment program or of an equivalent program approved by the department. After considering the petition, the court may change the offender's risk level designation if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the offender's risk of committing a repeat sexual offense has changed since the time sentence was imposed. The court shall impose one of the three risk levels specified in this section.

(4) If, at the time of sentencing, the sentencing judge did not apply a level designation to a sexual offender who is required to register under this part and who was sentenced prior to October 1, 1997, the department shall designate the offender as level 1, 2, or 3 when the offender is released from confinement.

(5) If an offense is covered by ~~46-23-502(10)(a)(xvii)~~ 46-23-502(10)(a)(xviii), the offender registers under 46-23-504(1)(c), and the offender was given a risk level designation after conviction by another state or the federal government, the department of justice may give the offender the risk level designation assigned by the other state or the federal government. All offenders convicted in another state or by the federal government who are not currently under the supervision of the department or the youth court and were not given a risk level designation after conviction shall provide to the department of justice all prior risk assessments and psychosexual evaluations done to evaluate the offender's risk to reoffend. Any offender without a risk assessment or psychosexual evaluation shall, at the offender's expense, undergo a psychosexual evaluation with a sexual offender evaluator who has a license endorsement as provided for in 37-1-139. The results of the

psychosexual evaluation may be requested by the attorney general or a county attorney for purposes of petitioning a district court to assign a risk level designation.

(6) The lack of a fixed residence is a factor that may be considered by the sentencing court or by the department in determining the risk level to be assigned to an offender pursuant to this section.

(7) Upon obtaining information that indicates that a sexual offender who is required to register under this part does not have a level 1, 2, or 3 designation, the offender, the attorney general, the county attorney that prosecuted the offender and obtained a conviction for a sexual offense, or the county attorney for the county in which the offender resides may, at any time, petition the district court that sentenced the offender for a sexual offense or the district court for the judicial district in which the offender resides to designate the offender as level 1, 2, or 3. Upon the filing of the petition, the court may order a psychosexual evaluation report at the petitioner's expense, or order that the results of all prior psychosexual evaluations be provided to all parties. The court shall provide the offender with an opportunity for a hearing prior to designating the offender. The petitioner shall provide the offender, the attorney general, and the county attorney that prosecuted the offender with notice of the petition and notice of the hearing. As provided in 46-23-506(2)(d), petitions for relief from registration under this part must be filed in the appropriate Montana district court. Orders or other documents granting relief from registration requirements that originated in other jurisdictions are not valid in Montana."

Section 9. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 45, chapter 5, part 6, and the provisions of Title 45, chapter 5, part 6, apply to [section 1].

Section 10. Severability. If a part of [this act] is invalid, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid part remain in effect. If a part of [this act] is invalid in one or more of its applications, the part remains in effect in all valid applications that are severable from the invalid applications.

Section 11. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 82, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE BILL NO. 82

INTRODUCED BY K. LOVE

BY REQUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN; CREATING THE OFFENSE OF GROOMING OF A CHILD FOR A SEXUAL OFFENSE; REVISING CERTAIN CRIMES TO INCLUDE A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHOM THE OFFENDER BELIEVED TO BE A CHILD; REVISING THE OFFENSE OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN TO INCLUDE COMPUTER-GENERATED CHILD PORNOGRAPHY; ADDING THE OFFENSE OF GROOMING OF A CHILD FOR A SEXUAL OFFENSE TO THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL OFFENSE; AMENDING SECTIONS 45-5-504, 45-5-601, 45-5-625, 45-5-711, 45-8-201, 46-23-502, AND 46-23-509, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”