



# NEWS

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**From the Illinois Senate**

***State Senator Dave Koehler***

**For immediate release**

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**Further information:**

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## **NEW LAW PROTECTS PRIVACY**

PEKIN, IL—Yesterday, the governor signed into law a measure to help protect the privacy of social workers' clients.

“The right to privacy gives people a sense of dignity and self-respect,” said State Sen. Dave Koehler, the legislation's sponsor. “Many people who are served by social workers already have difficult lives. We need to do all we can to help make things easier for them.”

The new law, which began as Senate Bill 1507, grants social workers the right to share privileged information with superiors, colleagues or consultants who are also bound by the professional responsibility to maintain confidentiality. However, the law also makes it clear that sharing such information must be voluntary—not even social workers' supervisors can force them to disclose privileged information.

“If social workers need the advice of their supervisors or colleagues, they should be able to get it,” Koehler said. “This law makes it clear that such communication is legal, as long as both parties share professional responsibility to maintain confidentiality.”

The law also clarifies that social workers are not required to share privileged information with someone who is not bound by the rules of professional confidentiality. Some social workers have reported cases in which a general supervisor—who was not required to maintain confidentiality—insisted that he or she be given privileged information.

“The crux of this law is protecting people's privacy,” said Koehler. “No administrators or public officials should know private information about people's lives unless they are required to keep that information to themselves.”

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