

## Assembly Bill No. 114

### CHAPTER 464

An act to amend Section 1109 of the Evidence Code, relating to child abuse.

[Approved by Governor October 4, 2005. Filed with  
Secretary of State October 4, 2005.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 114, Cohn. Child abuse.

Under existing law, evidence of a person's character, such as opinion or specific instances of conduct, is generally not admissible to prove a defendant's conduct on a particular occasion, with specified exceptions. Existing law provides, however, that when a defendant is accused of domestic violence in a criminal action, evidence of the defendant's prior acts of domestic violence may be admitted to prove the defendant's conduct, except as to the findings and declarations of a regulatory agency or when the acts occurred more than 10 years ago or the court exercises its discretion to exclude the evidence of prior acts, as specified.

This bill would provide that when a defendant is accused of child abuse in a criminal action, evidence of the defendant's prior acts of child abuse may be admitted to prove the defendant's conduct, except as specified and subject to an evidentiary hearing. The bill would also define "child abuse" for purposes of that provision and would make other nonsubstantive changes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 1109 of the Evidence Code is amended to read:

1109. (a) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (e) or (f), in a criminal action in which the defendant is accused of an offense involving domestic violence, evidence of the defendant's commission of other domestic violence is not made inadmissible by Section 1101 if the evidence is not inadmissible pursuant to Section 352.

(2) Except as provided in subdivision (e) or (f), in a criminal action in which the defendant is accused of an offense involving abuse of an elder or dependent person, evidence of the defendant's commission of other abuse of an elder or dependent person is not made inadmissible by Section 1101 if the evidence is not inadmissible pursuant to Section 352.

(3) Except as provided in subdivision (e) or (f) and subject to a hearing conducted pursuant to Section 352, which shall include consideration of any corroboration and remoteness in time, in a criminal action in which the defendant is accused of an offense involving child abuse, evidence of the

defendant's commission of child abuse is not made inadmissible by Section 1101 if the evidence is not inadmissible pursuant to Section 352. Nothing in this paragraph prohibits or limits the admission of evidence pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 1101.

(b) In an action in which evidence is to be offered under this section, the people shall disclose the evidence to the defendant, including statements of witnesses or a summary of the substance of any testimony that is expected to be offered, in compliance with the provisions of Section 1054.7 of the Penal Code.

(c) This section shall not be construed to limit or preclude the admission or consideration of evidence under any other statute or case law.

(d) As used in this section:

(1) "Abuse of an elder or dependent person" means physical or sexual abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment that results in physical harm, pain, or mental suffering, the deprivation of care by a caregiver, or other deprivation by a custodian or provider of goods or services that are necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering.

(2) "Child abuse" means an act proscribed by Section 273d of the Penal Code.

(3) "Domestic violence" has the meaning set forth in Section 13700 of the Penal Code. Subject to a hearing conducted pursuant to Section 352, which shall include consideration of any corroboration and remoteness in time, "domestic violence" has the further meaning as set forth in Section 6211 of the Family Code, if the act occurred no more than five years before the charged offense.

(e) Evidence of acts occurring more than 10 years before the charged offense is inadmissible under this section, unless the court determines that the admission of this evidence is in the interest of justice.

(f) Evidence of the findings and determinations of administrative agencies regulating the conduct of health facilities licensed under Section 1250 of the Health and Safety Code is inadmissible under this section.