

Momentum builds for 'Kassidy' law

Petitioners urge legislators to increase penalties for not reporting child abuse

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ROCHESTER — The effort to create stiff penalties for violators of New Hampshire's child abuse reporting law is gaining strong support statewide in memory of Kassidy Bortner.

Howard C. Hedegard Jr., spokesman for the grass-roots effort behind "Kassidy's Petition," said the number of New Hampshire voters who have signed petitions has doubled since April. There are at least 800 signatures on the petitions.

*"The law is too lenient.
It's not enough."*

— Letter from Rochester
woman to petition organizer

The effort, which began in the Lakes Region, has spread to include strong support from individuals in the Seacoast, Concord and southern New Hampshire.

The petition will be presented to New

Hampshire legislators. If the effort is successful, it would mandate felony charges for individuals who do not report child abuse suspicions in cases where a child is seriously injured or killed.

Kassidy died at York Hospital in York, Maine, on Nov. 9 after what court documents describe as weeks of abuse at the hands of her mother's live-in boyfriend, Chad E. Evans of 191 Milton Road in Rochester. Kassidy was 21 months old at the time of her death.

Evans, 29, has since been charged with second-degree murder and is

awaiting a November trial at Strafford County Superior Court.

Kassidy's mother, 19-year-old Amanda Bortner, knew her boyfriend abused Kassidy for up to six weeks before the child's death, according to statements she made to police as recorded in court documents. Bortner neither reported Kassidy's many injuries nor sought medical attention for the child, according to authorities.

New Hampshire does have a manda-

☆ *Kassidy*

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