

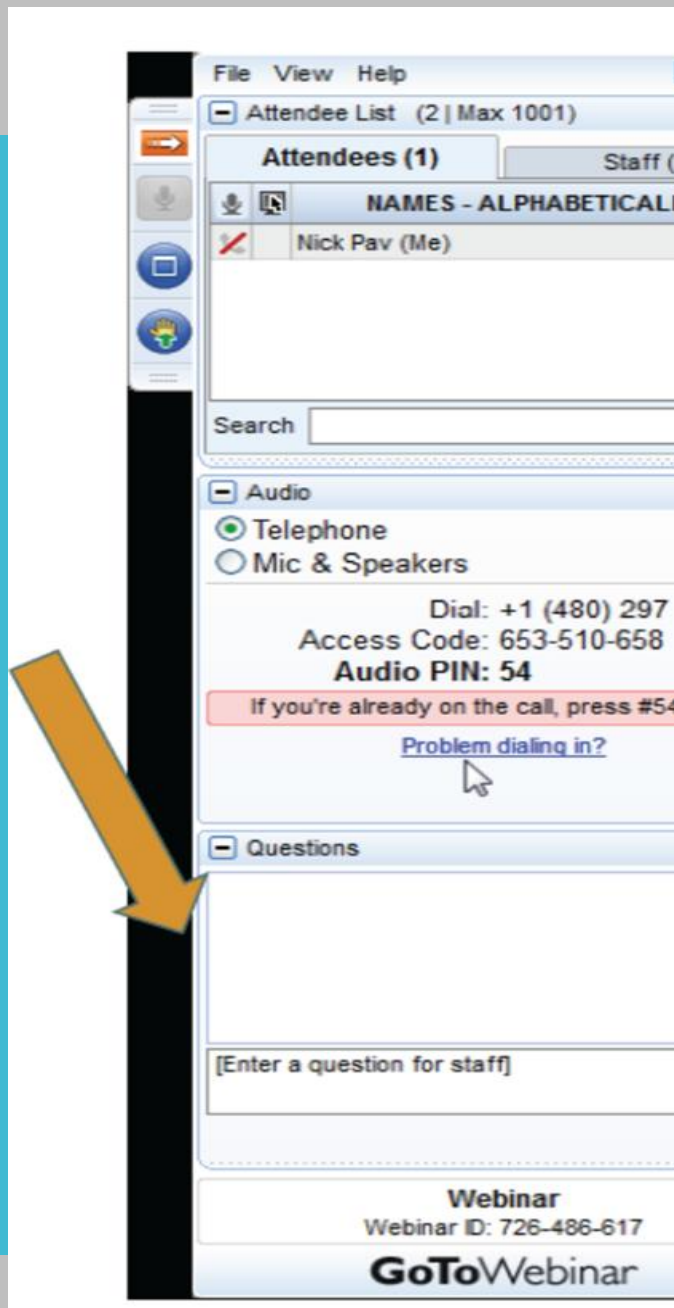
WEBINAR | MARCH 2025

# 2025 Priority Child Welfare Bills and Budget Requests

**ALLIANCE**  
*for* **CHILDREN'S**  
**RIGHTS**



# Logistics



- Webinar resources, including recording and supplemental materials, will be posted at <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/>
- All attendees are muted during webinar.
- Please submit questions using the “Questions” function on your GoToWebinar dashboard.

# 2025 Child Welfare Bills, Budget Requests and Budget Proposals







# FY 2025-26 Budget

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A high-angle photograph of three children sitting on a paved surface, drawing colorful chalk art. One child in a yellow shirt is in the upper center, another in a red shirt and blue overalls is in the lower left, and a third in a purple shirt is in the lower right. The pavement is covered with various colorful chalk drawings, including a large blue face-like shape on the right and several abstract shapes in pink, yellow, and blue on the left.

# Children Now

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Susanna Kniffen

Senior Managing Director,  
Child Welfare & Government Relations



# AB 689 (Rubio)

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- AB 689 will establish a statewide **Child Welfare Disaster Response Fund** to ensure resources are immediately available to disaster-impacted communities
- This fund will mitigate the urgent needs of children and youth in foster care and their caregivers, including their needs for transportation and interim housing and to replace essential belongings



# **California Tribal Families Coalition**

**Blair Kreuzer**

Co-Executive Director





**AB 1378 (Rogers)**  
***Tribal Access to FFPSA***  
***Prevention Services***

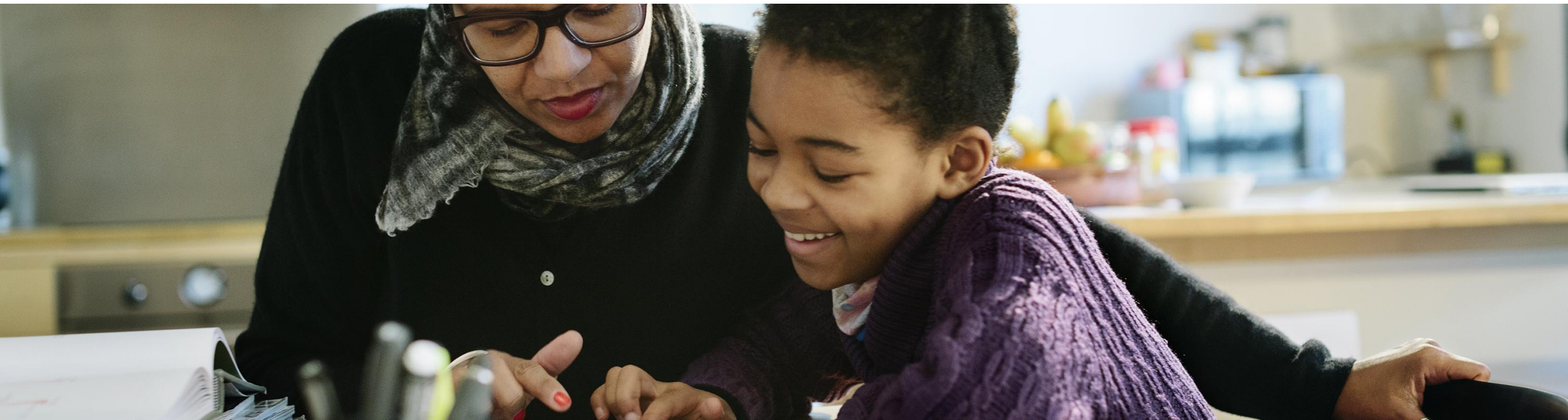
- helps prevent tribal children from entering foster care by supporting tribal access to agreements with CDSS to provide prevention services programs





# Children's Law Center of California

**Julie McCormick**  
Senior Policy Attorney



- clarifies the role of counsel by requiring that appointed attorneys for nonminor dependents advocate for their expressed wishes rather than substituting their judgment

## **AB 373 (Rubio)**

Client Directed  
Representation for  
Nonminor  
Dependents



# AB 926 (Gipson)

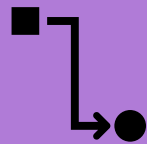
## Family Time



- amends WIC to create a rebuttable presumption that family time between a parent/guardian and their child should be unsupervised, unless there is a determination that the child's safety is in danger
- in cases where the court determines that supervision is necessary, requires bench officers to set the frequency and duration of family time

# AB 1099 (Bryan)

## Regional Center Fast Track Process for System-Involved Youth



- reduces the barriers that system-involved youth commonly encounter in the Regional Center 2-step intake process so that they receive timely eligibility determinations and can secure essential services to prevent unnecessary family separation and institutionalization
- establishes data collection regarding the eligibility process for all applicants along with data specific to system-involved youth to enable comparative analysis to identify and address additional challenges with regional center processes



# AB 1192 (Carillo)

## Notice of Substantiated Allegations



- requires child welfare agencies to provide notice:
  - to parents and their lawyers when there is reasonable suspicion that their child has been abused in a foster care placement; and
  - to a minor's attorney when there is a reasonable suspicion that another child has been abused in the same foster care placement

# SB 452 (Weber Pierson)

Prevention Legal  
Services



- one-time request of \$6 million (over a 3-year period) to create a pilot program in which grants would be made available to organizations for the purpose of providing prevention legal services to families who are at risk of child welfare involvement or who have been referred to the child protection agency



- **apply \$15 million of the \$30 million in gap funding** (intended to address shortfalls in the drawdown of federal matching funds) already appropriated in the judicial branch's budget to the state's General Fund line item **for dependency counsel**;
- **request that the Legislature and Governor direct the Judicial Council of California to undertake a review** – in consultation with dependency counsel stakeholders – **to identify job requirements added since 2014; and correct the dependency counsel funding allocation model to account for those workload impacts** as well as adequate county counsel salary comparisons and a realistic administrative cost component; and no later than November 30, 2025, report the results of this review to the Legislature, including the increase in state funding needed to achieve optimal caseload standards

# Dependency Counsel Legal Representation

*Budget Request*



# California Alliance of Child and Family Services

**Adrienne Shilton**

Vice President of  
Public Policy and  
Strategy



# AB 276 (Bennett)

Addressing  
Background  
Check Delays in  
Childrens'  
Residential  
Programs

- AB 276 allows for prospective employees in CCL Children's Residential Programs who have lived out of state within the past 5 years and awaiting the out-of-state child abuse check to be hired, prior to a complete background check, as long as they do not have unsupervised contact with kids
- Employee must already be cleared by the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the California Child Abuse Central Index Check (CACI) through the state's background check system



# AB 534 (Schiavo)

Foster Youth  
Housing Contracts



- AB 534 would support transition-aged foster youth service providers in purchasing properties to house youth they serve by amending Transitional Housing Program contracts to increase the availability of private financing



# AB 1314 (Ahrens)

## THPP Flexibility

- provides flexibility by limiting county contracts for Transitional Housing Placement Programs (THPPs) to existing state licensing requirements

# SB 531 (Rubio)

Serving Youth and  
Reducing Substance Use

- SB 531 will help **empower young Californians and destigmatize mental health challenges by requiring all California students in grades 1-12 be provided with an age-appropriate mental health education**



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# FFA Bridge Funding *Budget Request*

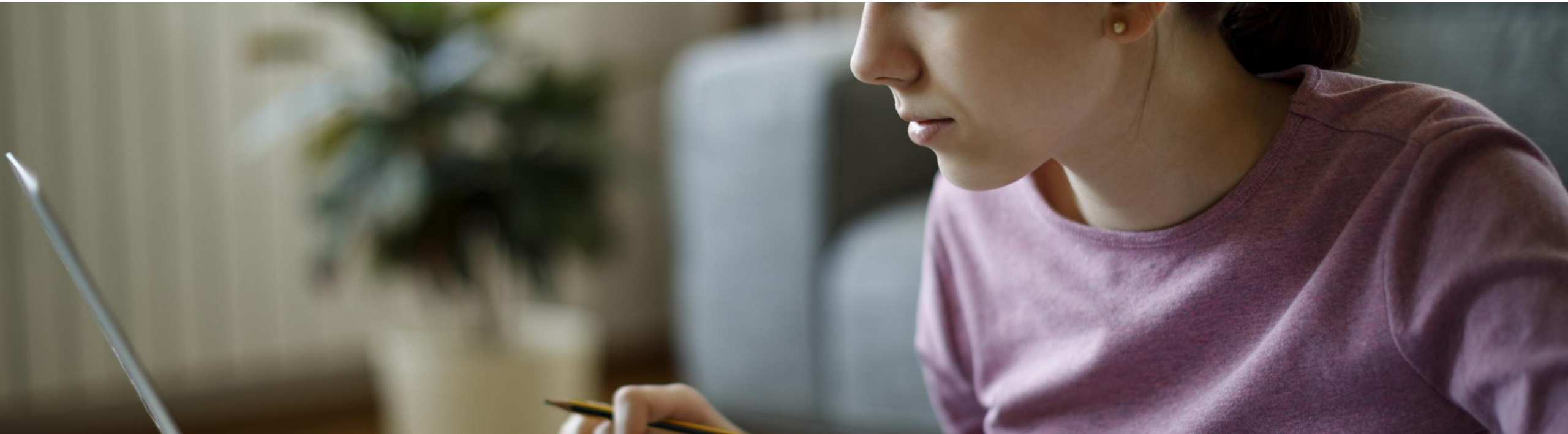
## FFA Bridge Funding

- **\$47 million in bridge funding over two years** to stabilize the 220 Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) across the state to preserve placements for the over 7,400 foster youth in their care

**John Burton  
Advocates for Youth**

**Jessica Petrass**

Director of Education



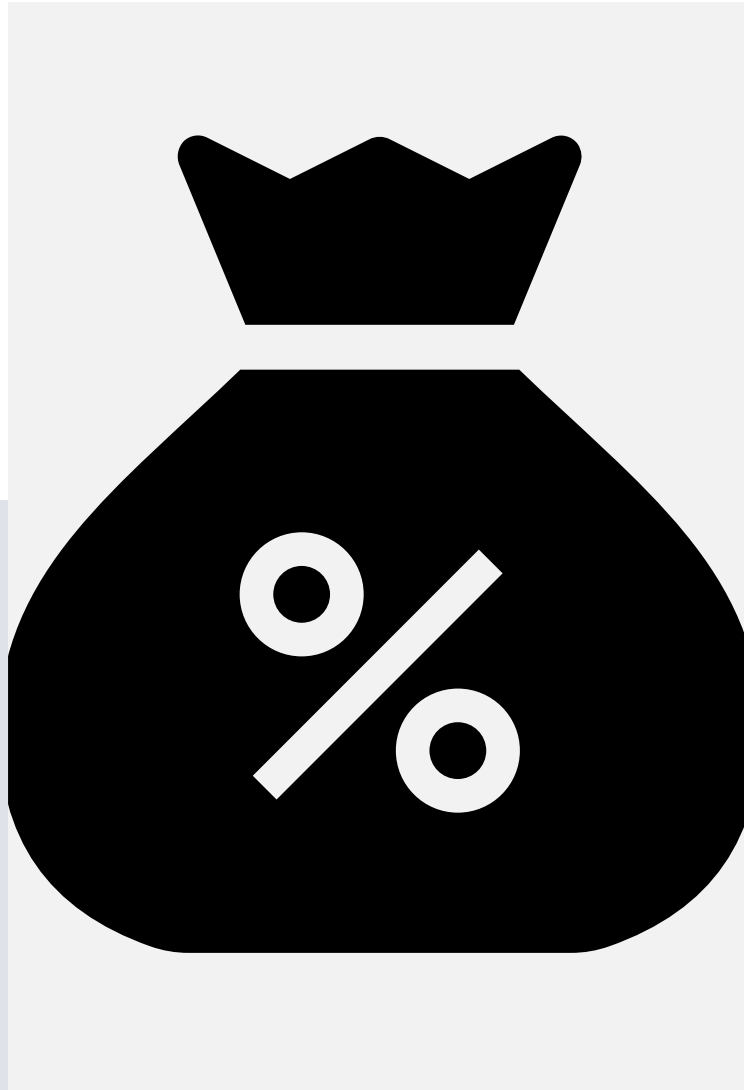
## AB 791 (Berman)

### Improving Cost of Attendance Budgets & Adjustment Policies for Student Success

- requiring that postsecondary institutions in California have accurate and transparent cost of attendance budgets and adjustment policies as a condition of participation in the Cal Grant program







## **SB 624 (Caballero)**

### **Increasing Access to the California Foster Youth Tax Credit (FYTC)**

- requires county child welfare agencies to mail annual information about the FYTC and tax filing to every nonminor dependent in their care
- requires CDSS to issue guidance on FYTC implementation best practices for county child welfare agencies at least bi-annually

# Youth Law Center

**Jennifer Rodriguez**

Executive Director







## AB 896 (Elhawary) Foster Youth Placement Transitions

- requires county development of **child-centered and developmentally sensitive policies** for children/youth who are **transitioning** between homes
- requires CDSS guidance on **best practices and strategies** for successful placement transition planning



**Alliance for  
Children's Rights**

**Kristin Power**

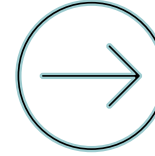
Vice President,  
Policy & Advocacy



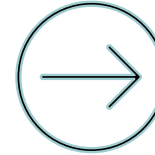
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# AB 495 (C. Rodriguez)

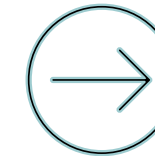
## The Family Preparedness Plan Act of 2025



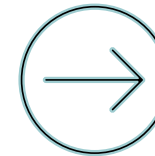
requires schools to implement specific policies ensuring that emergency contact information is kept up to date



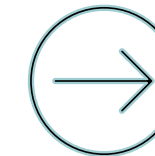
standardizes recognition of Caregiver's Authorization Affidavits so schools and agencies honor them consistently



expands the categories of caregivers eligible to use a caregiver affidavit to include non-relative extended family members



clarifies a parent's choice for who should serve as their children's guardian be given due weight by the Probate Court



creates a new Short-Term Guardianship process in Probate Court, allowing parents facing immigration –related separations to designate a short-term guardian while maintaining their parental rights



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## AB 680 (Ahrens) Foster Care Benefits Eligibility Review

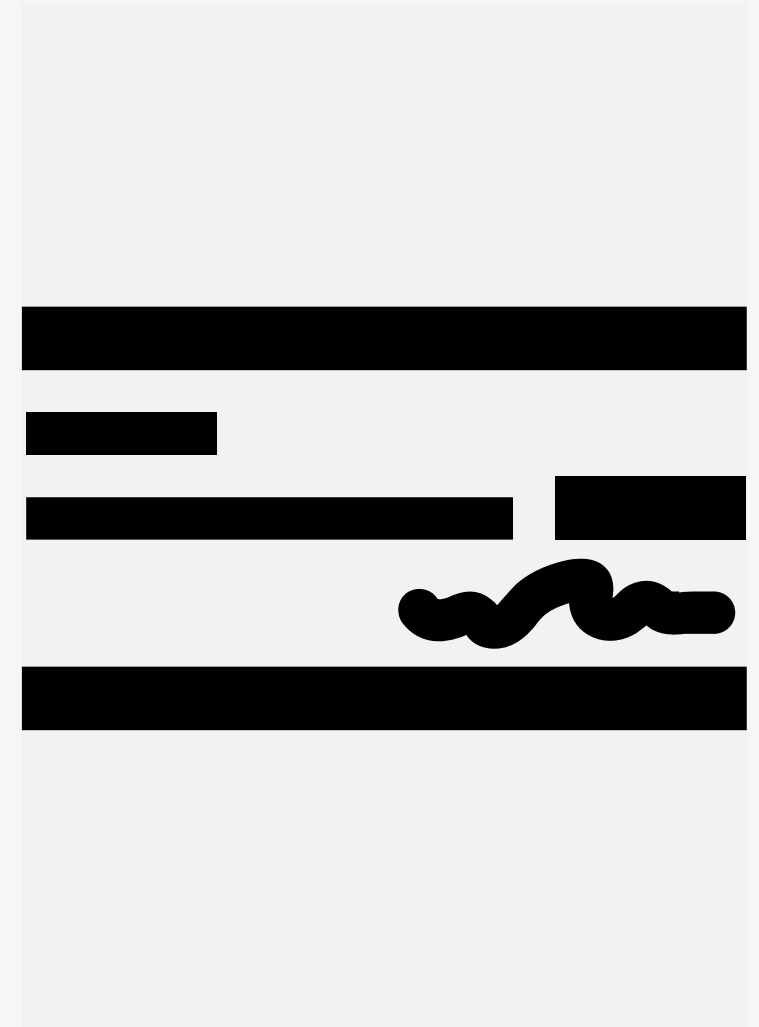
- ensures timely and comprehensive foster care benefit evaluations to prevent disruptions in financial support
- delays and incomplete assessments create instability, placing unnecessary burdens on caregivers and youth including financial hardship and avoidable administrative hearings



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## AB 1080 (Bryan) Ensuring Proper Management of Foster Youth's Social Security Disability Benefits

- AB 2906 will **stop the practice of county agencies collecting Social Security disability benefits to pay for the cost of foster care and create notification requirements to increase the number of eligible foster youth linked to Social Security benefits upon their exit from care**



**County Welfare  
Directors  
Association of  
California**

**Amanda Kirchner**  
Director of Legislative  
Advocacy



# AB 607 (C. Rodriguez)

## Home Visiting Programs

- AB 607 proposes to extend the enrollment timeframe from a child under 24 months old to a child under 36 months old and extend the time that families can participate in the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program until the child's fifth birthday
- extension will maximize the health and developmental benefits to families with young children, including those in underserved, rural, tribal, impoverished, and other vulnerable communities





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# AB 898 (Bryan)

## Family Urgent Response System

- authorizes a county-based mobile response system that is not otherwise responding to calls placed through the statewide hotline to utilize mobile response team staff based on local needs, including by providing ongoing support to a child, youth, or caregiver who has received mobile response services
- requires the county-based mobile response system to prioritize calls placed through the statewide hotline for urgent responses and maintain sufficient staffing to ensure county-based mobile response teams maintain compliance

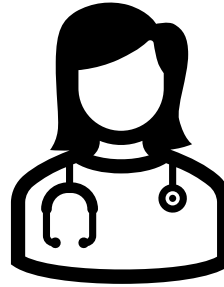
Family Urgent Response System



**AB 970 (McKinnor)  
Mandated Reporter/  
Community Supporter Pilot**

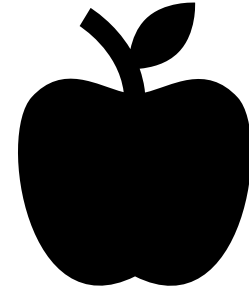
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# Federal Cuts to County- Administered Safety Net Programs *Budget Request*



**Medicaid**

\$900 billion in cuts



**SNAP**

\$230 billion in cuts



**TANF**


10% cut



**CalWORKs**  
**Administrative**  
**Funding**  
***Budget Request***

\$245  
Million



An aerial photograph showing a large fire burning through a dense forest. Thick white and grey smoke rises from the fire, partially obscuring the trees in the upper left. The fire line is visible as a bright orange and yellow path winding through the green canopy. The trees are mostly green, but some are charred and blackened near the fire.

\$70.9 million General Fund (GF) in FY 2025-26 and \$95.9 million General Fund in FY 2026-27 and annually ongoing to provide dedicated funding and resources to bolster county human services departments' provision of mass care and shelter, support emergency and disaster preparedness and response, and address unmet critical immediate needs of survivors that counties serve

# **Disaster Preparedness and Response *Budget Request***





**Home Safe & Bringing Families Home**



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# Child & Adolescent Needs & Strengths Fidelity & Training



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored sweater and white earbuds, is smiling while looking at a smartphone. She is holding the phone with both hands. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some pillows or blankets. A teal-colored rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

# California Coalition for Youth

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Kim Lewis, Lewis Advocacy



# AB 249 (Ramos) Youth-Specific Coordinated Entry System (CES)

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- requires all Continuums of Care (CoCs) to annually certify that their CES includes youth-specific processes such as youth-specific entry points, assessment, and prioritization scores, and youth appropriate housing and services, and a Youth Advisory Board
- each CoC must have housing in their inventory specifically for youth that is a mix of rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. Many CoCs have youth-specific CES. This bill ensures baseline minimum standards around CES for youth





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# SB 492 (Menjivar) Youth Housing Bond Act of 2025

- creates a dedicated funding source, the 2025 Youth Housing Bond Fund, to combat youth homelessness
- allows both public agencies and community-based organizations with specific youth expertise to apply for the youth bond funds
- supports housing for youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness and current and former foster youth





# **Other Child Welfare- Related Proposals**

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## AB 494 (Davies)

### Nonminor Dependent Access to Existing Services



allows judicial discretion in waiving the one-year residency requirement at the request of an NMD when an NMD demonstrates a significant connection to the new county, such as employment, enrollment, stable housing, or family or community ties



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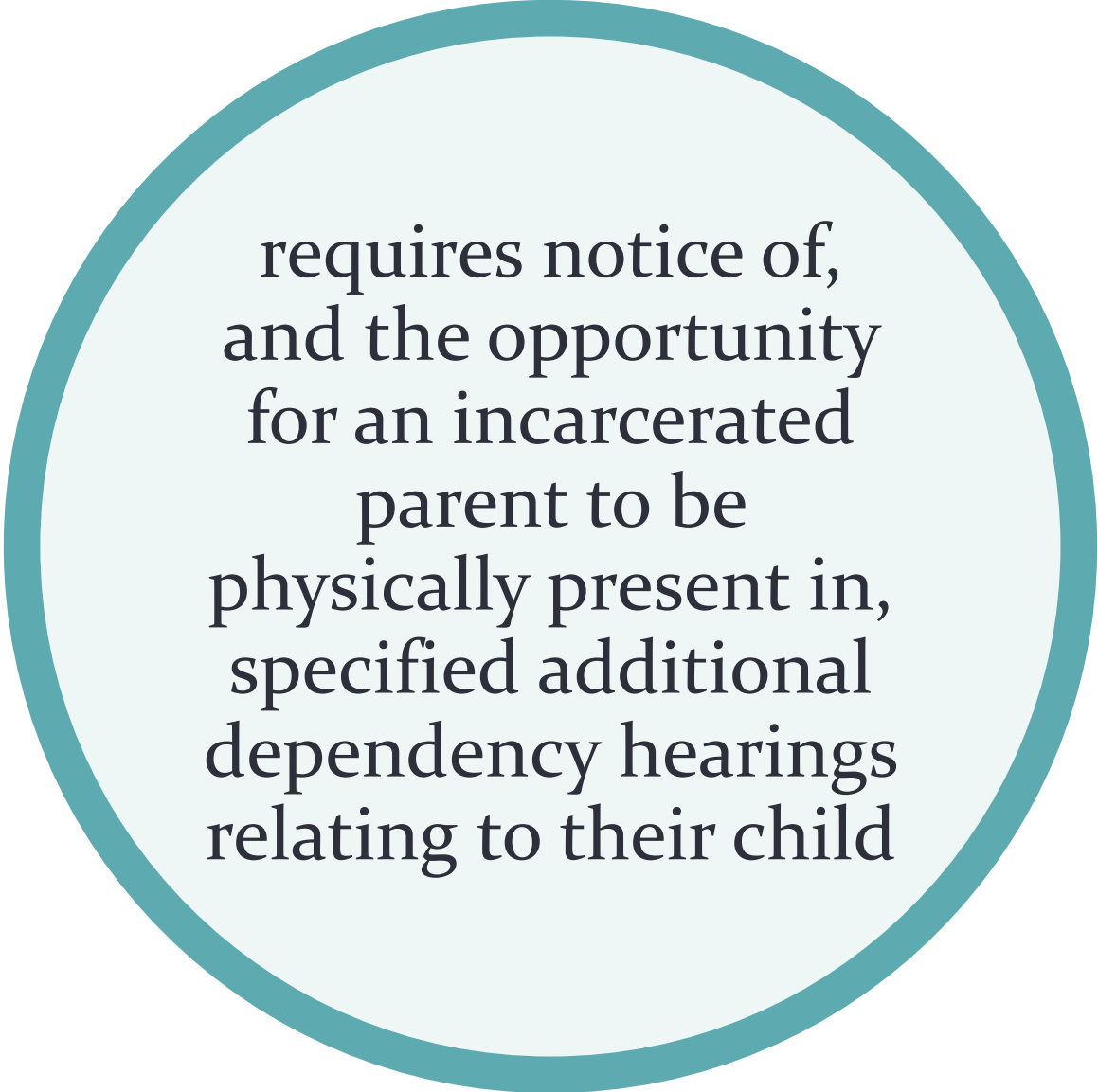
# **AB 562 (Solache)**

## **Justice Through Placing Foster Children with Families Act**

- **Accountability and Transparency:**  
Mandating counties to track and report data on kinship placements annually, with a county public hearing and corrective actions required for counties below statewide averages
- **Leveraging Best Practices:**  
Encouraging counties to adopt evidence-based strategies for family finding and placement, such as secondary reviews when children are not placed with kin

# AB 651 (Bryan)

## Access To Justice



requires notice of,  
and the opportunity  
for an incarcerated  
parent to be  
physically present in,  
specified additional  
dependency hearings  
relating to their child

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## AB 1195 (Quirk-Silva)

### Ensuring In-Person Visitation for Incarcerated Parents in Dependency Cases

- Requires reunification orders for incarcerated parents to include specific provisions ensuring regularly scheduled, in-person visitation with their child
- Mandates that county jails facilitate these visits by making incarcerated parents available
- Requires child welfare agencies and county jails to document all scheduled visits and submit records to the court at each dependency hearing





## **AB 1201 (Jackson) Expanding Reunification Services for Parents with Violent Felony Convictions**

- requires the court to conduct an individualized assessment before denying reunification services based on a parent's prior violent felony conviction.
- mandates that the court find either:
  - violent felony involved harm to the child, or
  - parent poses a current and documented risk to the child's safety
- requires a trauma-informed assessment of the impact of separation before the court decides to deny reunification services

# Resources

- Alliance for Children's Rights - <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/policy/>
- California Alliance of Children and Family Services - <https://www.cacfs.org/advocacy>
- California Coalition for Youth - <https://calyouth.org/>
- California Tribal Families Coalition - <https://caltribalfamilies.org/>
- Children's Law Center of California - <https://www.clccal.org/our-work/legislation-and-policy/>
- Children Now - <https://www.childrennow.org/childwelfare/>
- County Welfare Directors Association of California - <https://www.cwda.org/state-budget-priorities>
- John Burton Advocates for Youth - [Advocate With Us | John Burton Advocates for Youth \(jbay.org\)](https://www.jbay.org/)
- Youth Law Center - [YLC – Standing Up for Children at Risk](https://www.youthlawcenter.org/)

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*for* **CHILDREN'S**  
**RIGHTS**



**CALIFORNIA**  
**TRIBAL FAMILIES**  
**COALITION**



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**CWDA**  
Advancing Human Services  
for the Welfare of All Californians



**Children**  
**Now**



**JOHN BURTON**  
**Advocates**  
*for* **Youth**

