
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Alvarado-Gil, Chair
2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No: SB 608
Author: Becker
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Heather Hopkins
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Child health and safety: “Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids” license plate program

SUMMARY

This bill increases the fees for issuance and renewal of “Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help our Kids” (Kids’ Plate) license plates and revise allocation of funds derived from that program. This bill reduces the percentage provided to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division and increases the allocation of funds to childcare safety and health and First 5 county commissions.

ABSTRACT

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes the Kids’ Plate program and sets fees for the initial, renewal, transfer and replacement of the plates. (*Vehicle Code 5072*)
- 2) Creates within the State Treasury the Child Health and Safety Fund. Requires that moneys for the fund shall be derived from the Kids’ Plate program and that civil penalties on child day care facility providers shall be deposited into this fund. Requires that revenue to be allocated as follows:
 - 50 percent, plus \$501,000, to CDSS for childcare licensing and administration
 - 25 percent to CDSS for child abuse prevention, 90 percent of which is deposited into the county’s children’s trust fund
 - 25 percent to DPH to support prevention education, training, and technical assistance on a specified list of ten childhood unintentional injury areas. (*WIC 18285*)
- 3) States Legislative intent that specified priorities and programs be funded and implemented in the order they are listed, and that each priority and program may be funded and implemented independently of the other priorities and programs. Requires the Directors of the Department of Motor Vehicles and CDSS to annually make a determination whether the total annual receipts for the Kids’ Plate program is sufficient to cover these priorities and programs and, if so, for CDSS to implement that priority or program. (*WIC 18285.5*)
- 4) Requires that a county board of supervisors that designates a commission with duties primarily related to services for children, as specified, shall also establish a county

children's trust fund, as specified. Further requires that money in the county children's trust fund shall be used to fund child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. (*WIC 18965 et seq.*)

- 5) Creates in the State Treasury, the State Children's Trust Fund, and requires money from the Fund to be allocated to CDSS for the purpose of funding child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs, as specified. (*WIC 18969*)

This Bill:

- 1) Raises the fee for a Kids' Plate special license plates from \$50 to \$90 for issuance of a personalized plate and \$40 to \$80 for renewal of a personalized plate.
- 2) Increases the cost of "Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids" special license plates with a sequence assigned by DMV from \$20 to \$40 for issuance of a license plate and \$15 to \$30 for renewal.
- 3) Changes the allocation of the funds collected from the program to be distributed as follows:
 - a. 5 percent of the funds shall be allocated to the Department of Public Health for injury prevention.
 - b. 20 percent of the funds shall be allocated to First 5 county commissions that elect to receive and utilize the funding. These monies shall be distributed in various shares related to the population of each county.
 - c. 50 of the funds shall be allocated to childcare safety and health. These funds shall be distributed in various percentages based on county population.
 - d. 25 percent of the funds shall be available for appropriation by the Legislature for child abuse prevention programs, expanded to include unintentional injuries associated with mental health.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Bill:

According to the author, The Kids' Plates specialty vehicle license program provides critical funding to essential local commissions and state departments committed to children's safety. However, the Kids' Plates Program has not been updated since its creation in 1992, despite the needs of the communities it serves changing and growing. Updating the Kids' Plates program is necessary to provide county and local commissions accessible funding to support their childcare safety, health licensing, and educational programs. Funding for the Kids' Plate has fallen behind funding levels for every other specialty license plate program. As a consequence, only 15 counties have successfully accessed these funds in the last two years. The current categories of

unintentional injuries in the Kids' Plates statute need updating to address today's causes of unintentional injury. SB 608 updates this list, addressing needed areas of children's health. Finally, the bill will equitably distribute funding to all counties so that the dollars directly impact the communities that need it most. Kids' Plates 2.0 will invest in all children's health across California.

Background

Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids – Kids' Plate Program

The Kids' Plate program allows vehicle owners to choose a hand, heart, star or plus sign for their license plate. Fees generated from the Kids' Plate program are deposited in the Child Health and Safety Fund and used for regulation of licensed child care facilities, child abuse prevention programs, and efforts to prevent childhood injuries.

Currently, the first 50 percent of the Kids' Plate revenue plus an additional \$501,000 is dedicated to support CCL responsibilities for child care licensing as follows: site visits, monitoring of the child care advocate program, training for investigative and licensing staff, other aspects of the child care advocate program and the salary of the chief of the child care licensing branch. Up to 25 percent of the remaining funds support child abuse prevention efforts lead by the counties and CDSS. CDSS may, as necessary, fund appropriate administrative costs. The rest supports DPH-run programs that address injury prevention.

Changes in Funding Allocation

Under current law, funding from the Kids' Plate program goes to three different programs: CDSS for childcare licensing and administration; CDSS for child abuse prevention; and DPH for prevention, education, training, and technical assistance on a specified list of ten childhood unintentional injury areas.

This bill proposes major changes to where the Kids' Plate program funds will go. CDSS will no longer receive any funding from this program. First 5 county commissions would get funds as well as counties for childcare safety and health programs.

First 5 California

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 10, adding a 50-cent tax to each pack of cigarettes sold to create First 5 California. First 5 California is a comprehensive system of education, health services, childcare, and other programs. It is dedicated to improving the lives of California's children. Since its creation, First 5 California has brought these critical services to millions of parents, caregivers, and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 California distributes funds to local communities through the state's 58 individual counties, all of which have created their own local First 5 county commissions. The amount of funding provided to each First 5 county commission is based upon the area's birth rate. Funds are used to address the local needs of communities statewide.¹

Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division

¹ <https://www.cafc.ca.gov/about/about.html>

CCL is responsible for the licensure or certification of approximately 72,000 licensed community care facilities that include child care, children's residential, adult and senior care facilities. CCL's Child Care Licensing Program is charged with ensuring licensed child care facilities meet health and safety standards through monitoring facilities, providing technical assistance, and establishing partnerships with providers, parents, and the child care community. CCL conducts pre-and post-licensure inspections for new facilities and unannounced visits to licensed facilities under statutorily-required timeframes. According to CDSS, their yearly allotment from this fund hovers around \$2 million.

Child Care Advocate Program (CCAP)

Within the CCL is the Child Care Advocate Program (CCAP), created to provide a link between child care licensing and the community. By statute, CDSS may establish a child care in each of its 14 licensing district regional offices. Currently 4 regional offices have an advocate program and those local offices tailor their activities to fit the needs of the local community. Child Care Advocates provide information to parents, child care providers, employers, educators, and community groups. They participate in community activities and special projects in order to:

- Disseminate information on the state's licensing role
- Provide information to the public and parents on child care licensing
- Act as a liaison to child care resource and referral agencies
- Serve as liaison to businesses, education groups, child care provider organizations, Resource and Referral Agencies, and other child care programs
- Assist county government and community agencies in capacity building and quality improvement efforts to ensure the availability of quality child care
- Assist in the coordination of complaints and concerns on behalf of children in child care

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Revenue from the Kids' Plate program is also used for child abuse and neglect prevention efforts at the state and county level, with the majority of funds dedicated to child abuse prevention is given to the counties. Counties are required to use these monies to fund child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. Funds are also used to support counties' Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Councils.

Unintentional Injury Prevention

Funds from the Kids' Plate program also support the Safe and Active Communities Branch (SACB) within DPH, which works to prevent unintentional childhood injuries. SACB is responsible for developing and implementing policies and program interventions and conducting surveillance activities to prevent deaths and disability from injury. SACB provides funding, technical assistance, and training to local entities to support the implementation of evidence-based programs and the distribution of child safety equipment. By statute, SACB's efforts to reduce unintentional injuries if children and youth are focused on:

- Vehicular Safety
- Drowning Prevention
- Playground Safety Standards
- Bicycle Safety
- Gun Safety
- Fire Safety
- Poison Control and Safety
- In-home Safety
- Childhood Lead Poisoning
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

This bill would add expand “fire safety” to include “home fire and burn safety and family disaster planning.” It would also add “unintentional injuries associated with mental health” to the list of programs eligible for funding. This is a term not defined in the bill. It is unclear if the author’s intent is to focus on injuries to children as a result of adult mental illness, mental illness of a child, or something else altogether.

How Funds from Kids’ Plate Program Are Distributed

The Unintentional Injury Policy and Program Section of California Department of Public Health (CDPH) oversees and administers part of the money annually appropriated under the current Kids’ Plate program. According to their website, due to high demand and limited amount of available funding, entities that had previously received Kids’ Plates funding in Fiscal Year 2018-2020 were not eligible to apply for funding for Fiscal Year 2021-2023. If the increased fees proposed in this bill did not decrease the number of applicants to the Kids’ Plate program, it would increase the funds available and allow previously funded entities to again be funded. According to the author, only 15 of California’s 58 counties have received funds from the Kids’ Plate program in the past two years.

Special License Plates

This bill seeks to increase the initial fee and renewals fee for Kids’ Plates. DMV currently offers a number of Special License Plates, ranging from Lake Tahoe Conservancy (VC 5075) to Breast Cancer Awareness (VC 5156.7) to California Arts Council (VC 5074). The majority of these plates have fees for initial personalized plates of \$103, and renewals of \$83, and for plates with a sequence assigned by the DMV, an initial fee of \$50 and renewal of \$40. Because this bill has not yet been analyzed by a fiscal committee, it is unclear how raising fees in any amount may impact the total number of dollars collected through the Kids’ Plate program.

Related/Prior Legislation:

AB 3087 (Speier, Chapter 136, Statutes of 1992) creates the California Kids Plate program, as well as the Children’s Health and Safety Special Fund to capture and expend the revenues off of the Kids Plate license sales and renewals.

SB 1158 (McGuire, 2018) would have increased the fees for initial license plates under the Kids’ Plate program and would have revised the allocation of funds derived from that program to reduce the percentage provided to CDSS CCL Division, increased the percentage allocated to the CDPH, and provided a new allocation to the Emergency Medical Service Authority. The bill also would have modified the list of specified child health and safety concerns administered by DPH. This bill was held in Senate Appropriations.

AB 2602 (Salas, 2022) would have reallocated funds from the Kids’ Plate program as follows: 50 percent to local childcare and development planning councils, 25 percent to county commissions that elect to receive funding and would limit the spending of those funds for certain purposes, including administering the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project (CUIPSP), 10 percent to the nonprofit organization that provides administrative and staff support to the CUIPSP. This bill was not set for a hearing.

COMMENTS

The Kids' Plate program was enacted in 1992. Neither the amount of fees nor the distribution of those funds has been changed since. This bill would end its funding toward some programs, most notably CDSS. Because this bill has not yet been analyzed by a fiscal committee, it is unclear how it might impact oversight of child care providers by CCL. According to the Senate Appropriations analysis of a similar bill, SB 1158, in 2018, the decrease in the allocation percentage provided to CDSS would result in a loss of revenue for the department, with CDSS receiving approximately \$1.5-2.0 million less to go toward CCL efforts. It is unclear what the revenue loss to CDSS would be this year and if backfill would be available in the budget to keep CDSS funding at its current levels.

Double Referral: This bill is double referred to Senate Transportation Committee.

POSITIONS**Support:**

California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health (Sponsor)
Association of California Life & Health Insurance Companies
Children's Advocacy Institute Center for Public Interest Law
First 5 Association of California

Oppose:

None received

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