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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### AB 1074 (Patel) - CalWORKs

**Version:** May 23, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** August 18, 2025

**Policy Vote:** HUMAN S. 5 - 0

**Mandate:** Yes

**Consultant:** Agnes Lee

**Bill Summary:** AB 1074 would make changes to the CalWORKs program related to family reunification cases.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- Unknown ongoing General Fund costs for CalWORKs benefits and/or services and for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for state administration.
- Unknown one-time General Fund costs, potentially hundreds of thousands, for automation.
- Unknown costs to counties for administration. Cost to counties would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

**Background:** The CalWORKs program provides temporary cash assistance aimed at moving children out of poverty and helping qualified low-income families meet their basic needs such as rent, clothing, utility bills, food, and other items needed to ensure children are cared for at home and safely remain with their families. In addition to cash assistance, adult CalWORKs recipients participate in welfare-to-work activities and are provided education and employment and training services designed to help remove barriers to work and promote self-sufficiency. CalWORKs is funded through a combination of state and county funds and federal funds received through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

**Child Welfare Services Family Reunification.** Under current law, when a child has been removed from the home through the child welfare system, the parent is considered to be living with the child for a period of up to six months, or for a time period as determined by CDSS, of the child's absence from the family assistance unit. The parent is eligible for CalWORKs aid, childcare and other services, if all of the following conditions are met:

- The child has been removed from the parent or parents and placed in out-of-home care.
- When the child was removed from the parent or parents, the family was receiving CalWORKs aid.

- The county has determined that the provision of CalWORKs aid or services is necessary for reunification.

**Welfare-to-Work Plan.** Adults who participate in CalWORKs are also required to participate in welfare-to-work activities, unless exempted, which includes: employment, education, job skills training, and/or vocational education, work study on college campuses, on-the-job training, community service, and job retention services, or activities to address or remove barriers like mental health, substance use disorder, and domestic abuse. Eligible families can also receive supportive services like child care, transportation financial assistance, financial assistance for ancillary expenses, mental health services, substance abuse services, and personal counseling. Everyone who is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities must obtain a welfare-to-work plan.

**Immunization Policy.** Current law requires CalWORKs applicants to provide documentation that all children in the assistance unit not required to be enrolled in school have received all age appropriate immunizations, unless it has been medically determined that an immunization for a child is not appropriate or the applicant or recipient has filed with the county welfare department an affidavit that the immunizations are contrary to the applicant's or recipient's beliefs. If the documentation is not provided within the required time period, as specified, the family will be sanctioned whereby the needs of all parents or caretaker relatives in the assistance unit will not be considered in determining the grant to the assistance unit until the required documentation is provided.

**Proposed Law:** Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Clarify that for purposes of receiving CalWORKs benefits when a child has been removed from the home through child welfare services, existing provisions do not require that all children be removed from the parent or parents and that a family is considered receiving aid, even if, at the time of removal, the needs of the parent or parents were not included in the grant; and require that these changes only take effect upon the CDSS determining that the changes will be cost neutral or will result in savings, as specified.
- Require that for individuals receiving CalWORKs benefits when a child has been removed from the home through child welfare services, welfare-to-work activities and services must be included in a CalWORKs reunification plan, as defined, which must satisfy the requirement to have a welfare-to-work plan, or in a jointly developed child welfare services and CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan, which must serve as the CalWORKs reunification plan, as defined.
- Require that a sanction imposed for failing to verify the immunization of a child, must end upon the removal of the child from the assistance unit and their placement into out-of-home care.

**Related Legislation:** SB 290 (Smallwood-Cuevas) would repeal the existing requirement that CalWORKs applicants provide documentation that children have received all age appropriate immunizations. The bill is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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