
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1201 (Jackson) - Family reunification services

Version: June 8, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: HUMAN S. 4 - 0, JUD. 11 - 2

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 1201 would make changes regarding the provision of child dependency reunification services to a parent or guardian who has been convicted of a violent felony.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown, likely minor, General Fund costs to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for state administration.
- Unknown ongoing General Fund costs, potentially hundreds of thousands, to counties for administration and to provide reunification services. Proposition 30 of 2012 provides that any legislation enacted after September 30, 2012 that has an overall effect of increasing the costs already borne by a local agency for realigned services applies to local agencies only to the extent that the state provides annual funding for the cost increase.

Background: Under the child welfare services (CWS) system, social workers in each county receive reports of abuse or neglect, and investigate and resolve those reports. If it is determined that a child cannot remain in the home, even with family preservation and support services, the child comes under the jurisdiction of the county's juvenile dependency court while the family is served by a CWS system social worker. The system seeks to ensure the safety and protection of these children, and where possible, preserve and strengthen families through visitation and family reunification. It is the state's goal to reunify a foster child or youth with their biological family whenever possible.

Generally, if a child cannot be safely returned home after the time allotted for reunification services ends, the court terminates the parental rights of the child's parents. The child's case plan then focuses on permanency services, in an effort to connect the child to a permanent placement through adoption or guardianship. If an adoption or guardianship is not established, a child may remain in long-term foster care.

Current law provides that reunification services need not be provided to a parent or guardian when the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that the parent or guardian of the child has been convicted of a violent felony, as defined. Current law also prohibits a court from ordering reunification for a parent or guardian who has been convicted of a violent felony unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that reunification is in the best interest of the child.

Proposed Law: AB 1201 would specify instead, that the current law provisions described above only apply to a violent felony when the victim was either a child, or the victim was someone with whom the parent or guardian had a child in common at the time of the commission of the offense.

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