

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1646 (Bryan) – As Introduced January 27, 2026

Policy Committee: Public Safety

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes the right of youth confined in juvenile facilities to nonsexual and appropriate physical contact with visitors during in-person visits.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Unknown reimbursable annual costs (General Fund) for juvenile facilities to establish policies and procedures for in-person visitation consistent with this measure. Juvenile facilities would encounter unknown, but likely minor costs to implement the changes the bill proposes. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs to local agencies.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

- 2) The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) reports no significant costs, estimating that the impact of this measure would be absorbable into its current workload.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Background.** Existing law recognizes the importance of maintaining family contact for youth confined in juvenile facilities. The Youth Bill of Rights, enacted in 2007, guarantees confined youth the right to maintain frequent and continuing contact with parents, guardians, siblings, children, and extended family through visitation, and prohibits facilities from denying contact with family or attorneys as a form of discipline. State regulations adopted by the BSCC establish minimum standards for juvenile facilities, including requirements that facilities allow visitation with parents, guardians, and a youth's children and provide at least two hours of visitation per week at reasonable times, unless security concerns justify restrictions. Facilities may also permit visits with other family members or supportive adults, may not deny visitation solely based on a visitor's criminal history unless the person presents a safety risk, and generally may not replace in-person visits with technological alternatives.

This bill builds on those visitation rights by requiring that youth confined in juvenile facilities be permitted reasonable, nonsexual physical contact with visitors during in-person visits, such as hugging or holding hands. Facilities would be required to adopt policies governing visitation that are consistent with this right. The bill applies broadly to youth

confined in juvenile facilities, which include juvenile halls, camps or ranches, and local secure youth treatment facilities. This framework reflects the broader restructuring of California's juvenile justice system following the closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Historically, the state operated large juvenile correctional facilities, but legislation, beginning with SB 81 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 175, Statutes of 2007, shifted responsibility toward counties, and SB 823 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 337, Statutes of 2020, ultimately closed DJJ and required counties to house youth who previously would have been committed there in local Secure Youth Treatment Facilities. As a result, most youth are now confined in county-run facilities rather than state institutions, and the visitation standards addressed by this bill primarily apply to those local settings.

The BSCC is the state entity responsible for establishing minimum standards for the operation of these local detention facilities. The BSCC adopts regulations governing the treatment and conditions of confined youth, such as rules on visitation, and monitors local facilities for compliance with those standards.

- 2) **Related Legislation.** AB 1645 (Gonzalez) would prohibit Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) regulations from unreasonably restricting nonsexual physical contact between incarcerated people and visitors during contact visits.

Analysis Prepared by: Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081