

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1688 (Carrillo) – As Amended March 12, 2026

Policy Committee:	Human Services	Vote:	6 - 0
	Public Safety		9 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires notice of reports of abuse or neglect of a foster youth alleged to have occurred in facilities or placements licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to be sent to the attorney who represents a parent of the dependent child, as well as the attorneys who represent the remaining children in that placement.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Expands the 36-hour notification requirement for reports of neglect or abuse alleged to have occurred in CDSS-licensed facilities, to also require notice of the report be given to the attorney who represents a parent or legal guardian of the child in dependency court.
- 2) Specifies the notification requirement consist of a notice that a report has been made and may not disclose any information concerning the substance of the report.
- 3) Specifies the notification requirement does not apply to a parent whose parental rights have been terminated or a parent who is not entitled to reunification services.
- 4) Requires, if the neglect or abuse was alleged to have occurred in a placement, all attorneys who represent foster youth in that placement to receive notice of the report. For these purposes, a placement includes, but is not limited to, placement in foster care or congregate care, placement in a short-term residential therapeutic program facility, or relative placement.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Estimated General Fund (GF) costs to counties of an unknown amount, potentially in the mid-tens of thousands of dollars annually to meet the notification requirements. Costs will depend on the number of reported incidents of abuse in foster homes or licensed facilities and the amount of time needed to identify contact information and prepare and send notices to multiple attorneys. For context, data from 2022 indicates approximately 170 children were victims of abuse by their foster parents. If a social worker spent three hours on each of the 170 cases, annual costs would be approximately \$51,000.

Although these are state-mandated costs, they are not reimbursable, but instead must be funded by the state pursuant to Proposition 30, which requires legislation enacted after September 30, 2012, that has an overall effect of increasing the costs already borne by a local agency for programs or levels of service mandated by realignment (including child welfare

services and foster care) to apply to local agencies only to the extent the state provides annual funding for the cost increase.

- 2) Estimated one-time automation costs to CDSS of an unknown amount but likely in the low-to mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars to generate a notice of the report to attorneys.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

[Foster] youth have often experienced abuse, neglect, and trauma, which can have lasting effects on their well-being. However, gaps in reporting requirements leave them vulnerable to further harm. [This bill] strengthens notice requirements to ensure all relevant parties are informed. Greater transparency in reporting cases of abuse or neglect is essential to safeguarding foster youth. This bill reflects our shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable children in our state.

- 2) **Background.** California's child welfare services system exists to protect children from abuse and neglect, and in doing so, to provide for their health, safety, and overall well-being. When suspicions of abuse or neglect arise, Child Protective Services (CPS) is tasked with investigating the allegations reported to them by mandated reporters and others.

Existing law requires a local law enforcement agency or a county social services or probation department to notify the CDSS licensing office within 24 hours of receiving a report of abuse that is alleged to have occurred in a facility licensed by CDSS, or when there is a report of the death of a child who was, at the time of death, living in a facility licensed by CDSS.

Additionally, these agencies or departments are required to notify, within 36 hours, a minor's attorney when there is a reasonable suspicion that the minor has been abused or neglected. However, this requirement does not extend to the attorney of the child's parents or to the attorneys of other foster children residing in the same placement.

The Children's Bureau, part of the federal Office of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), found in 2022 that 169 California children were victims of abuse or maltreatment by their foster parents. Nationally, six children were killed by foster parents in that same year. According to the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, the rate of maltreatment in California occurring specifically while children were in foster care was 8.57 per 100,000 days of care.

Under existing law, a foster youth's attorney must make recommendations to the court concerning the child's welfare. Advocates assert, without basic information of suspected abuse, attorneys cannot render informed recommendations to the court and, without this notice, attorneys for other foster youth cannot take action to ensure the safety and protection of their clients.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1192 (Carrillo), of this legislative session, was similar to this bill but required a redacted copy of the report be provided to the parent's attorney and all attorneys representing children in that placement. The redacted copy required personal

identifying information be removed. AB 1192 was held on this committee's suspense file.
This bill instead requires only a notice of the report.

Analysis Prepared by: Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081