
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2247
Author: Elhawary (D), et al.
Amended: 8/13/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE: 10-0, 6/17/26

AYES: Weber Pierson, Valladares, Caballero, Durazo, Gonzalez, Menjivar,
Padilla, Pérez, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Grove

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 12-1, 6/30/26

AYES: Umberg, Allen, Ashby, Caballero, Durazo, Laird, Reyes, Stern,
Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NOES: Niello

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-17, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

SUBJECT: Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and
Exposed Youth Act

SOURCE: Californians for Safety and Justice
Youth Alive!

DIGEST: This bill establishes the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act pilot grant program in four counties, only until January 1, 2032, to the extent that funds are provided, to pay for mental health and counseling services for youth survivors of gun violence.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Medi-Cal program, administered by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), which provides medical coverage to low-income persons. [Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) §14000, et seq.]
- 2) Establishes the California Victim Compensation Board, which administers the Restitution Fund from which the state, as declared by the Legislature, deems it the public interest to assist residents of the state in obtaining compensation for the pecuniary losses they suffer as a direct result of criminal acts. [Government Code [GOV] §13900-§139745]

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth Act (THRIVE) pilot grant program, only until January 1, 2032, administered by DHCS, only to the extent that funds are provided from the THRIVE Youth Fund (the Fund) for these purposes.
- 2) Requires DHCS to award Los Angeles County (LAC) a grant to establish and administer a program to pay for mental health and counseling services for youth survivors of gun violence who request those services and who reside in those counties.
- 3) Creates the Fund within the State Treasury. Moneys deposited into the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, may be expended by DHCS for the purposes in this bill.
- 4) Requires LAC to use funds awarded to establish and administer a program to pay for mental health and counseling services for youth survivors within the county who request those services. Permits LAC to designate a lead agency—except for any law enforcement agency as a lead agency—for the purposes of administering a program.
- 5) Permits LAC to provide stipends to youth survivors directly, or to their parents or guardians for survivors who are minors, to pay for their own mental health and counseling services; pay providers or peer support specialists directly for mental health and counseling services on behalf of youth survivors; or, provide funds to one or more community-based organizations, to distribute in stipends to youth survivors to pay for mental health and counseling services, or to pay providers directly to provide these services.

- 6) Prohibits more than 10% of the funds from being used to support program administration of LAC or of a community-based organization that receives funds from LAC.
- 7) Requires LAC to establish policies and procedures for distributing funds to youth survivors that comply with all of the following:
 - a) Allow youth survivors, or their parents or guardians for survivors who are minors, to attest to their experiences of gun violence without requiring external documentation of the gun violence incident, and to select a licensed mental health services provider or peer support specialist of their choice, regardless of whether the provider or specialist accepts insurance, Medi-Cal, or another form of coverage;
 - b) Provide youth survivors with a list of mental health care providers and peer support specialists in the county with expertise in recovery from trauma or violence. This list may include, but is not limited to, providers trained under the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Aware Initiative, or that are listed in the statewide ACEs Aware Clinician Directory, and who provide individual counseling;
 - c) Do not exclude youth survivors on the basis of citizenship or immigration status; of an arrest, conviction, or juvenile adjudication record; or, of a status under correctional supervision; and,
 - d) Establish a mechanism to ensure youth survivors are not required to incur out-of-pocket mental health and counseling expenses or wait to be reimbursed for those costs.
- 8) Prohibits LAC from requiring, as a condition of receiving mental health and counseling services, that a youth survivor report any crime to a law enforcement agency, or require documentation from law enforcement of the incident of gun violence.
- 9) Prohibits a stipend or payment, notwithstanding any other law, from reducing a youth survivor's maximum benefit allowance provided by the California Victim Compensation Board, except that an expense for specific purposes paid in full for a youth survivor under this bill shall not be eligible for reimbursement or payment by the board for the same purposes.
- 10) Requires client information and records of mental health services provided pursuant to this bill to be confidential and exempt from inspection under the California Public Records Act.

- 11) Permits DHCS to implement and administer the THRIVE grant program through all-county letters or similar instruction that shall have the same force and effect as regulations.
- 12) Makes findings and declarations that this bill imposes a limitation on the public's right of access to the meetings of public bodies or the writings of public officials and agencies. The Legislature further finds that in order to protect the privacy and safety concerns of victims of violent crime, and to provide records relating to private health care services, it is necessary that this bill limit the public's right of access to that information.

Background

According to the author of this bill:

When young people experience violence, timely support can make the difference between surviving and truly healing. But in California, too many youth, especially those in under-resourced communities, face real barriers to accessing mental health care after trauma. Existing systems are difficult to navigate, slow to respond, and often out of reach when support is needed most. Too many young survivors fall through the cracks. This bill creates more accessible pathways to care by allowing trusted, community-based organizations to directly support youth victims. This bill is about meeting young people where they are and making sure help is available when it matters most.

In 2022 alone, per the California Firearm Injury Dashboard, nearly 2,000 children and youth 25 and under were injured or killed by an act of gun violence. The burden of violent victimization is not borne equally: Black youth in California are victims of gun violence at a rate 21 times that of their White peers, and Latino youth at a rate four times that of their White peers. Youth living in low-income communities are especially vulnerable, as one study found that the risk of death from a firearm injury for youth ages five to 25 increases significantly based on county poverty concentration, and estimated that nationally “more than half of all firearm-related deaths and two-thirds of all firearm-related homicides could be associated with living in a county with higher poverty concentration.” Lack of support for young people who have experienced trauma can leave lasting impacts, including on school and work, long term mental and physical health, and vulnerability to future victimization. Youth survivors of gun violence are at heightened risk for mental health and substance use disorders, and need support to recover following violence.

Commission for Behavioral Health (CBH) report. In 2025, CBH released “Stopping the Hurt: Preventing the Harms of Firearm Violence via Public Behavioral Health, The Impacts of Firearm Violence Project Report.” The report notes that firearm violence is not inevitable; it is predictable and preventable. Like heart disease, traffic accidents, and smoking-related illnesses, there are well-known pathways, risk factors, and interventions to reduce firearm violence and mitigate its harms. CBH identified three key findings and three recommendations to prevent firearm violence.

- a) *Finding 1:* Firearm violence is a persistent threat to behavioral health, but California is not treating it that way.

Recommendation 1: California must establish trauma-informed violence prevention as a public behavioral health priority.

- b) *Finding 2:* California faces challenges for effective firearm violence prevention stemming from misconceptions, cultural tensions, and fear.

Recommendation 2: California must deploy a public engagement initiative to regain trust and build relationships with firearm-owning communities and communities impacted by violence.

- c) *Finding 3:* California’s public investments have not been coordinated effectively to address the underlying causes of violence and other public health concerns.

Recommendation 3: California must develop a unified statewide strategy, with an appointed leader, to guide a public health approach to firearm violence prevention that integrates data, resources, and partners from across sectors.

The CBH report notes that the direct effects of firearm violence can be debilitating for those harmed, but the subsequent effects of these incidents ripple out even farther, and they are not limited to any person, group, or generation. They affect all Californians. Public survey data show that one-in-four people consider gunshots and shootings to be a problem in their neighborhood. Even more striking, roughly one-in-five Californians know someone who has been shot on purpose. Indirect firearm violence impacts a broad range of people, including those who witness a shooting, people living in the neighborhood where it occurs, people who have lost a loved one to violence, and those belonging to a group targeted by mass violence. Nearly half of Californians who are exposed to violence in their neighborhood

experience social functioning problems, including issues with their job, school, or interacting with their friends and family. People helping victims of violence, such as first responders, hospital workers, and behavioral health providers, are also impacted. These and other forms of indirect exposure to firearm violence can cause anxiety, fear, depression, difficulty focusing, and a host of other trauma- and anxiety-related symptoms. The report states an opportune time to intervene in the cycle of trauma and violence is after violence has occurred. Those who are directly or indirectly harmed by violence are at higher risk for continuing health and mental health challenges if their trauma is not addressed. The necessary ingredients for healing this trauma vary by person, but one of the most evidence-based factors for healing is community.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Unknown one-time General Fund costs, potentially hundreds of thousands annually during the pilot, for the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for state administration.
- Unknown one-time General Fund costs, potentially low millions, to provide grant funding.
- Unknown General Fund cost pressures to expand or continue the pilot program beyond the sunset date.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/13/26)

Californians for Safety and Justice (co-source)

Youth Alive! (co-source)

All for Kids

All of US or None

All of US or None Orange County

Back to the Start

Brady United Against Gun Violence

California Coalition for Women Prisoners

California Public Defenders Association

Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice

Courage California

Drug Policy Alliance

East Bay Community Law Center

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Families Inspiring Reentry & Reunification 4 Everyone

Fresh Lifelines for Youth

GLIDE

Legal Services for Prisoners With Children

Prosecutors Alliance Action

Riverside County Democratic Party

Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition

One individual

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/13/2026)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: Californians for Safety and Justice (CSJ), as the sponsor, and other supporters argue that too many young victims of gun violence are not getting the help they need and deserve: a 2023 study found that three out of five children aged five to 18 who are injured by a firearm do not receive mental health services within six months following a firearm injury. And, in a 2019 poll of crime survivors, CSJ found that 41% of crime victims would have wanted counseling or mental health support but never received it, compared to just 12% who received such help. For too long, public safety systems haven't helped victims or stopped crime cycles, despite billions spent every year. Instead, too much incarceration and bureaucracy—and too little crime prevention, rehabilitation, or trauma recovery—has meant that the cycle of harm continues.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-17, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alanis, Flora, Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez, Wallis

Prepared by: Reyes Diaz / HEALTH / (916) 651-4111

8/17/26 10:13:58

**** **END** ****