

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
AB 2283 (Jeff Gonzalez) – As Amended March 25, 2026

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Vote: 12 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish a full-time position known as the State Public Guardian to assist county public guardians and public conservators in performing their duties under the Probate Code, including by providing technical assistance, developing a standardized referral form, and exploring a standardized statewide reporting system.

FISCAL EFFECT:

CDSS estimates significant ongoing General Fund costs in the low-to-mid-millions for the creation of an Office of the State Public Guardian within CDSS. A more direct intervention would involve state assistance in expanding county public guardian staffing capacity, which would be likely be more expensive than this bill's approach.

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

COMMENTS:

County public guardians and public conservators are appointed under the Probate Code to serve as guardians or conservators of last resort for individuals — typically elderly, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated — who have no available family member, friend, or other person to serve. Typical duties include authorizing medical treatment, monitoring personal care and medications, managing finances, and arranging appropriate residential care. All 58 counties operate public guardian and public conservator offices, generally within health and human services or county counsel structures, and operations vary considerably across counties. There is currently no state-level entity providing centralized technical assistance, training coordination, or policy support specifically for Probate Code guardianship and conservatorship work. According to the California Master Plan for Aging, nearly 10 million Californians — approximately 25% of the state's population — will be age 60 or older by 2030. Because cognitive decline is a common feature of aging, demand for public guardian and public conservator services is expected to grow substantially, compounding existing caseload pressures. The policy committee has observed that the core problem described in the bill's findings — overwhelming caseloads and limited local funding — is not directly addressed by creating a state-level office that provides technical assistance, training coordination, and policy recommendations. Compliance support and training access may be useful, but the policy analysis notes they are unlikely to materially reduce caseload burden or remedy local staffing shortages.

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