
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2304 (Lackey) - Social workers

Version: June 24, 2026

Policy Vote: HUMAN S. 5 - 0, PUB. S. 6 - 0

Urgency: No

Mandate: Yes

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 2304 would require a county child welfare services social worker to secure emergency medical services for a child, if it reasonably appears the child requires immediate care, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates costs of \$71,000 (\$52,000 General Fund and \$19,000 federal funds) per 100 cases for the costs associated with county social workers to secure immediate emergency medical, surgical, dental, or other remedial care. CDSS indicates that the actual fiscal impact is unknown at this time due to the lack of data on how many cases this would affect, as it is dependent on how many children would require immediate emergency care.
- Costs to counties for administration would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

Background:

Child Welfare Services. 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.

Current law provides that for a child taken into temporary custody, a child for whom a petition has been filed with the juvenile court, or a dependent child of the juvenile court, if it appears the child requires immediate emergency medical, surgical, or other remedial care in an emergency situation, that care may be provided by a licensed physician and surgeon or, if the child needs dental care in an emergency situation, by a licensed dentist, without a court order and upon authorization of a social worker.

Crimes Related to Public Records. Current law provides that every officer that has custody of any public record and steals, destroys, defaces, alters or falsifies that record is guilty of a felony. Current law also provides that every person who is "not an officer" who is guilty of the same conduct is subject to misdemeanor penalties.

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Revise the current provision that allows a county CWS social worker to authorize emergency care for a child, and instead require that if it reasonably appears that the child requires immediate emergency medical, surgical, or other remedial care in an emergency situation, the social worker must secure care for the child, as specified.
- Specify that for the purposes of existing law related to the crime of stealing, altering, falsifying or destroying a public record, a social worker employed by a county welfare department is not an officer.

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