

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

Chief Counsel: Andrew Ironside

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Nick Schultz, Chair

AB 2434 (Bonta) – As Amended April 7, 2026

SUMMARY: Requires California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) facilities to provide an incarcerated person with contact visits unless the person is housed in restricted housing, and establishes limitations on a CDCR facility's ability to search visitors without their voluntary, informed, and written consent. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires each CDCR facility to be open for visitation at least three days per week.
- 2) Prohibits a CDCR facility from denying, revoking, limiting, or interfering with visitation based on any of the following characteristics, whether actual or perceived, of a person in custody or a prospective visitor: sex; sexual orientation; race; age; nationality; political beliefs; religious beliefs and expression; criminal record; pending criminal or civil case; lack of family relationship; gender, including gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior or expression; disability; hair color, texture, or protective hairstyles, including, but not limited to, tightly coiled, curly, wavy, or Afro-textured hair, braids, locs, twists, Bantu knots, cornrows, Afros, and other natural hair styling methods; or, body type, body size, weight, height, or other physical characteristics.
- 3) Provides that a facility shall allow all visits with an incarcerated person to be contact visits unless the incarcerated person is housed in a restricted housing unit.
- 4) Authorizes a facility to limit an incarcerated person housed in a restricted housing unit to noncontact visits only for the duration of that placement.
- 5) Requires a facility to restore contact visits immediately upon the incarcerated person's return to a nonrestricted housing unit.
- 6) Prohibits a facility from denying, revoking, suspending, limiting, or interfering with visiting privileges for a disciplinary matter or rule violation unrelated to visitation.
- 7) Requires a facility to review any limitation, denial, or suspension of visitation imposed prior to January 1, 2027, at the incarcerated person's next annual classification review and modify it as necessary to conform to the provisions of this bill.
- 8) Prohibits a facility from denying visitors entry based on correctable issues, including, but not limited to, dress code violations, excess number of accompanying minors, or missing documentation. For correctable issues, staff shall do all of the following:
 - a) Provide clear and specific guidance on how to remedy the issue in writing;

- b) Allow the visitor a reasonable opportunity to correct the issue and return to visiting up to one hour before the end of the visiting period;
 - c) Permit the visit to proceed once the issue is resolved; and,
 - d) Offer reasonable alternatives, including a noncontact visit, when correction is not possible that day.
- 9) Requires the facility, if a visit is denied on the day of visiting for a noncorrectable issue, to provide written documentation to the visitor on the same day stating:
- a) The specific reason for denial;
 - b) The length of the denial and explaining how to appeal; and,
 - c) Information regarding the right to appeal and how to appeal.
- 10) Provides that a visit may not be denied if a person has traveled more than 100 miles to attend a visit or has not visited within 30 days, unless there has been a finding of a credible and documented security threat. The facility may not deny a visit under this provision for correctable issues, as described.
- 11) Authorizes a facility to subject any person coming onto the property to routine screening or a voluntary search to ensure facility security and prevent the introduction or removal of contraband.
- 12) Prohibits a facility from searching visitors without their voluntary, informed, and written consent unless facility officials possess a court-issued warrant or the individual is lawfully detained pursuant to other law.
- 13) Requires a facility to give visitors information regarding their right to refuse a voluntary search that is translated into the top five most commonly spoken languages in California according to the most recently completed census before providing their written consent to the search.
- 14) Prohibits a facility from forcibly searching any visitor who does not consent to a search. If a person refuses a voluntary search, as specified, the facility may only deny contact visiting for that day. The facility shall offer a noncontact visit on the same day, if space is available, unless there is an immediate and credible security threat.
- 15) Prohibits a facility from punishing refusal to consent to a search with suspension, termination, or future restriction of visitation privileges, nor shall the refusal to consent to a search be recorded as misconduct in any permanent record.
- 16) Requires a facility, for any visitor who is denied visitation or has visitation restricted due to failing a search or refusing to consent to a search, at the time of that denial, to issue a written notice detailing what occurred, the date, time, who was present, and the underlying rationale given to the visitor for the denial or restriction.

- 17) Requires a facility to conduct all searches in the least intrusive manner reasonably available and to limit searches to what is strictly necessary to address the specific security concern.
- 18) Provides that clothed body searches conducted by the facility shall consist of a visual inspection and use of a hand-held wand, and the facility shall prohibit physical contact by staff.
- 19) Requires a facility to conduct unclothed body searches only after providing notice that the search is voluntary, obtaining the visitor's written consent, and with reasonable suspicion that contraband is concealed on the body and no less intrusive means are available.
- 20) Requires the facility to require written supervisory approval for unclothed searches documenting the specific facts supporting reasonable suspicion. They shall be conducted in a private setting by staff of the same gender as the visitor, with no physical contact.
- 21) Prohibits the facility from conducting strip searches, body cavity searches, and any search involving physical intrusion without a court-issued warrant for the search.
- 22) Prohibits CDCR, except as specified, from conducting strip searches, visual body cavity searches, and physical body cavity searches of visitors who are under 18 years of age.
- 23) Authorizes CDCR, if it has probable cause and obtains a warrant to search, to conduct strip searches of visitors who are under 18 years of age.
- 24) Requires CDCR, if there is probable cause that the visitor is attempting to introduce contraband, unauthorized substances, or other unauthorized items into the institution, to notify the visitor and their parent or guardian in writing, and requires CDCR to receive written consent from the visitor and their parent or guardian prior to conducting the search.
- 25) Authorizes CDCR, if probable cause exists but the visitor and their parent or guardian do not consent to the visitor being searched, to offer a noncontact visit, if feasible, or deny the visit.
- 26) Requires the facility, if a visitor is subjected to a search exceeding the standard screening applied to all visitors, to provide written notice on the same day stating the specific reason for the search and the name and title of the approving official.
- 27) Requires the facility to log all searches beyond routine screening in a manner accessible for review through the visitation appeals process.
- 28) Requires CDCR to annually collect and publish data regarding searches, alerts, and resulting denials in aggregate form to ensure transparency and guard against discriminatory enforcement.
- 29) Requires the facility to make all written notices and documentation related to searches of visitors available in the five most common languages spoken in California according to the most recent census.
- 30) States that the facility shall permit all visitors who cannot clear a metal detector due to a medically implanted or prosthetic device to present written verification from a licensed

health care provider describing the device and its location.

- 31) Prohibits the facility from requiring renewal of that verification for permanent devices unless there is a material change in the device.
- 32) Prohibits the facility from requiring visitors who use wheelchairs or assistive devices to transfer to a facility wheelchair, and requires the facility to permit visitors to remain in their own wheelchair while the device is inspected using the least intrusive means available.
- 33) Prohibits the facility from punishing failure to present documentation under this provision with permanent suspension of visitation, but authorizes the facility to require alternative screening measures or a noncontact visit for that day.
- 34) Requires the facility to require that all searches be conducted professionally, respectfully, and without harassment, intimidation, or retaliatory intent.
- 35) Requires the facility to prohibit retaliatory searches, searches based on personal characteristics unrelated to safety, and degrading or sexualized comments.
- 36) Requires the facility to inform visitors of their right to file a complaint and shall prohibit retaliation for filing complaints.
- 37) Provides the following definitions:
 - a) “Assistive device” means mobility aids designed to assist mobility and safety for individuals with disabilities, including, but not limited to, manual and electric wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, mobility scooters, canes, and crutches.
 - b) “Credible security threat” means a specific, articulable, and documented facts that establish a reasonable belief that a visitor or incarcerated person presents an immediate and identifiable risk of introducing contraband, facilitating escape, or causing physical harm within the facility. A credible security threat shall be based on objective information, including reliable intelligence, direct observation, or verified evidence, and shall not be based solely on generalized safety concerns, institutional convenience, anonymous or uncorroborated allegations, personal characteristics, protected traits, prior criminal history unrelated to institutional safety, refusal to consent to a voluntary search, or the mere existence of a past rule violation.
 - c) “Facility” means any institution operated by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for the purposes of detention.
 - d) “Routine screening” means a standardized, minimally intrusive inspection process applied uniformly to all visitors as a condition of entry, for the limited purpose of detecting weapons or contraband. Routine screening shall consist only of passage through a walk-through metal detector or hand-held metal detection wand, visual inspection of personal property, or screening by electronic detection equipment applied in the same manner to all visitors.

- e) “Strip search,” “visual body cavity search,” and “physical body cavity search” have the same meaning as defined in Section 4030.
- f) “Visit” and “visitation” means an in-person visit conducted at a facility during established visiting hours.

38) Provides legislative findings and declarations.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides that any amendments to existing regulations and any future regulations adopted by CDCR that may impact visitation of incarcerated persons shall do all of the following:
 - a) Recognize and consider the value of visiting as a means to improve the safety of prisons for both staff and incarcerated persons;
 - b) Recognize and consider the important role of incarcerated person visitation in establishing and maintaining a meaningful connection with family and community;
 - c) Recognize and consider the important role of incarcerated person visitation in preparing an incarcerated person for successful release and rehabilitation. (Pen. Code, § 6400, subds. (a)-(c).)
- 2) Requires, at intake, every incarceration person to be asked whom they want on their approved visitor list. (Pen. Code, § 6400.)
- 3) Requires CDCR to develop policies related to the department’s contraband interdiction efforts for individuals entering CDCR detention facilities, including among others:
 - a) Application to all individuals, including visitors;
 - b) Use of methods to ensure that profiling is not practiced during random searches or searches of all individuals entering the prison at that time;
 - c) Establishment of unpredictable, random search efforts and methods;
 - d) All visitors attempting to enter a CDCR detention facility shall be informed that they may refuse to be searched by a passive alert dog; and,
 - e) All visitors attempting to enter a CDCR detention facility, who have a positive alert for contraband by an electronic drug detection device, a passive alert dog, or other technology, shall be informed of further potential search or visitation options. (Pen. Code, § 6404, subds (a)-(e).)
- 4) Provides that incarcerated persons shall not be prohibited from family visits based solely on the fact the incarcerated person was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole or was sentenced to life and is without a parole date established by the Board of Parole Hearings. (Pen. Code, § 6404.)

- 5) Requires CDCR to expedite a family visitation application process for incarcerated pregnant persons in order to prevent delays for visitation for the incarcerated mother and newborn child following delivery. (Pen. Code, § 6404.5, subd. (a).)
- 6) Requires CDCR, for an in-person visit, to all allow a visitor with an infant or toddler to bring items related to the care of the child. (Pen. Code, § 6405, subd. (b).)
- 7) Provides that whenever a person is sentenced to the state prison for violating a specified sex offense and the victim of the offense is a child under the age of 18 years, the court shall prohibit all visitation between the defendant and the child victim. (Pen. Code, § 1202.05)
- 8) States that every person who, without the permission of the warden or other officer in charge of any state prison, or any jail, communicates with any prisoner or person detained therein, is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Pen. Code, § 4570.5.)
- 9) Requires emergency in-person contact visits and video calls to be made available whenever an incarcerated person is hospitalized due to a serious or critical medical condition, including imminent danger of dying. When the incarcerated person is in imminent danger of dying, CDCR must allow up to four visitors at one time to visit the incarcerated person. (Pen. Code, § 6401, subd. (c).)
- 10) Defines “strip search,” “physical body cavity search,” and “visual body cavity search” as follows:
 - a) “Body cavity” means the stomach or rectal cavity of a person, and vagina of a female person;
 - b) “Physical body cavity search” means physical intrusion into a body cavity for the purpose of discovering any object concealed in the body cavity;
 - c) “Strip search” means a search which requires a person to remove or arrange some or all of his or her clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breasts, buttocks, or genitalia of such person; and,
 - d) “Visual body cavity search” means visual inspection of a body cavity. (Pen. Code, § 4030, subd. (c).)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Author's Statement:** According to the author, “Women, particularly Black women, are the primary visitors of incarcerated people. 1 in 4 women in this country has a loved one who is incarcerated. For Black women, that number nearly doubles to 1 in 2. Decades of research, including 18 studies, show unequivocally that visitation reduces recidivism, improves behavior while incarcerated, and helps people successfully return to their communities. Yet, 55% of women are only able to see their incarcerated loved one monthly or a few times a year. More than a quarter of these women never see their loved one at all. When women visit

their loved one, they routinely experience last-minute cancellations after traveling hundreds of miles, humiliating searches, sexual harassment by staff, retaliation for requesting basic dignity, and facilities turning away their children without explanation. Visitors deserve to be treated with basic dignity; and when a visit is denied, they deserve to know why. By making visitation unnecessarily burdensome, California prevents family unification and rehabilitation, which undermines the state's goal of reduced incarceration and harms our public safety. A 2011 study found that among people who received visits while incarcerated, felony re-convictions decreased by [13 percent](#), and revocations for technical violations of parole decreased by [25 percent](#) compared to those who did not receive visits. Every prison visit actively improves our public safety. AB 2434 protects families, incarcerated people, visitors, and our communities.”

- 2) **Incarcerated Person Visitation and the Effect of the bill:** The importance of visitation for incarcerated people and their families is well recognized. On its website, CDCR affirmatively states that visitation helps incarcerated people maintain family connection and community ties.¹ Existing law requires CDCR regulations to recognize and consider the value of visiting as a means to improve the safety of prisons for both staff and incarcerated persons, and the important role of incarcerated person visitation in establishing and maintaining a meaningful connection with family and community. (Pen. Code, § 6400, subs. (a) & (b).) Existing law also recognizes the important role of incarcerated person visitation in preparing an incarcerated person for successful release and rehabilitation. (Pen. Code, § 6400, subs. (a) & (b).)

Other provisions of law similarly suggest the state's commitment to the above principles. For example, existing law provides that incarcerated persons shall not be prohibited from family visits based solely on the fact the incarcerated person was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole or was sentenced to life and is without a parole date established by the Board of Parole Hearings. (Pen. Code, § 6404.) It also requires CDCR to expedite a family visitation application process for incarcerated pregnant persons in order to prevent visitation delays for the incarcerated mother and newborn child following delivery. (Pen. Code, § 6404.5, subd. (a).)

CDCR facilities must provide at least 12 hours of visiting per week. Regular visiting days are required to be consecutive and include Saturday and Sunday. CDCR facilities must make public the visiting schedules, including regular visiting days, holiday visiting days, and visiting appointments. Existing regulations also require that, when a specified holiday occurs on a day not regularly scheduled for visiting, each facility must nevertheless provide the same number of hours of visiting on that day as for any regularly scheduled visiting day. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3172.2, subd. (a)-(c).)

There are generally three types of visitation—in-person visits, in-person non-contact visits, and family visits. According to CDCR: “Most incarcerated people in the general population may participate in an in-person visit. These visits allow the incarcerated person to sit together with their visitor(s) in a designated shared space, usually furnished with tables and chairs. In-person visits are limited to five visitors at a time and are not limited in duration except for

¹ <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/visitors/>

normal visiting hours or terminations caused by overcrowding.”² In-person non-contact visits are for incarcerated people in reception or in segregation. “Non-contact visits occur with a glass partition between the incarcerated person and his/her visitors. The incarcerated person is escorted in handcuffs by staff to the visit. The handcuffs are removed only after the incarcerated person is secured in his/her side of the visiting booth... Non-contact visits are restricted to three visitors and are limited in time.”³ Finally, family visits (or overnight visitation) are visits where the incarcerated person and members of their immediate family are permitted to spend time in private, apartment-like facilities on prison grounds, for a duration that lasts approximately 30 to 40 hours. Incarcerated persons sentenced to death, convicted for sex offenses, still in reception, or under disciplinary restrictions are not permitted to have family visits.⁴

CDCR must approve visitors before incarcerated person visitation can be scheduled. Existing law requires, at intake, every incarcerated person to be asked whom they want on their approved visitor list. (Pen. Code, § 6400, subd. (a)(1).) CDCR approval requires a potential visitor to fill out a visitor questionnaire, which asks applicants for a list of all criminal convictions and arrests, even if the applicant was never charged or convicted following arrest. CDCR conducts background checks for arrests and convictions of all visitors and will deny anybody who fails to disclose a prior arrest or conviction.⁵ Once approved, an in-person visit at a CDCR facility can be scheduled.

CDCR imposes restrictions on the day of visiting as well. Among other things, all adults must present identification when being processed to visit; children under 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult; visitors must comply with attire restrictions; and visitors may only bring a “strictly limited” set of items to the visit without prior approval.⁶ CDCR will also search people visiting a CDCR facility for contraband and to maintain facility security. Inspection may include a search of the visitor’s person, personal property and vehicle(s) when there is reasonable suspicion to believe the visitor may be attempting to introduce contraband or unauthorized items or substances into, or out of, the institution or facility. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3173.2, subd. (a); see Pen. Code, § 6404, subds (a)-(e).) All visitors must submit to metal detection device(s) and/or electronic drug detectors, and may have to submit to passive alert canine search. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3173.2, subd. (c).) Other searches include a hand-held wand inspection, a clothed body search, and unclothed body searches when there is a reasonable suspicion that the visitor may be carrying contraband. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3173.2, subd. (d)(5)-(7).)

During visits, CDCR limits the amount of physical interaction between incarcerated people and their visitors. CDCR regulations provide that no bodily contact is permitted during visitation, except hand holding between an incarcerated person and their visitors, a brief embrace and/or kiss between an incarcerated person and their visitors at the beginning and end of each visit, and incarcerated person may hold their minor children and may hold children accompanied by an adult. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3175, subd. (b)-(g).)

² <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/visitors/types-of-visits/>

³ <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/visitors/types-of-visits/>

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/visitors/how-to-get-approved-to-visit-an-incarcerated-person/>

⁶ <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/visitors/prepare-to-visit/>

This bill, among other things, requires each CDCR facility to be open for visitation at least three days per week and prohibits a CDCR facility from denying, revoking, limiting, or interfering with visitation based specified characteristics. It further requires CDCR facilities to allow all visits with an incarcerated person to be contact visits unless the incarcerated person is housed in a restricted housing unit, authorizes a facility to limit an incarcerated person housed in a restricted housing unit to noncontact visits only for the duration of that placement. A facility must restore contact visiting immediately upon the incarcerated person's return to a nonrestricted housing unit.

Additionally, this bill prohibits a facility from denying, revoking, suspending, limiting, or interfering with visiting privileges for a disciplinary matter or rule violation unrelated to visitation. It prohibits a facility from denying visitors entry based on correctable issues, including, but not limited to, dress code violations, excess number of accompanying minors, or missing documentation. For correctable issues, CDCR staff must provide clear and specific guidance on how to remedy the issue in writing; allow the visitor a reasonable opportunity to correct the issue and return to visiting up to one hour before the end of the visiting period; permit the visit to proceed once the issue is resolved; and, offer reasonable alternatives, including a noncontact visit, when correction is not possible that day. Finally, this bill requires the facility, if a visit is denied on the day of visiting for a noncorrectable issue, to provide written documentation to the visitor on the same day stating the specific reason for denial; the length of the denial and explaining how to appeal; and, information regarding the right to appeal and how to appeal.

- 3) **Positive Impacts of In-Person Visitation:** Decades of research has shown that in-person visitation is beneficial, particularly when it comes to reducing recidivism. One study found that any visit reduced the risk of recidivism by 13 percent for felony reconvictions and 25 percent for technical violation revocations, which reflects the fact that visitation generally had a greater impact on revocations. The findings further showed that more frequent and recent visits were associated with a decreased risk of recidivism. A 1972 study on visitation that followed 843 people on parole from California prisons found that those who had no visitors during their incarceration were six times more likely to be reincarcerated than people with three or more visitors. Visitation is also correlated with adherence to prison rules. A 2019 study found that one additional visit per month would reduce misconduct by 14 percent. According to another study, misconduct tended to decrease in the three weeks before a visit. This may explain why more frequent visits lead to more consistent good behavior, better overall outcomes and post-release success. Research has also found that visitation is linked to better mental health, including reduced depressive symptoms for incarcerated persons.⁷
- 4) **Strip Searches:** This bill would prohibit strip searches, body cavity searches, and any search involving physical intrusion without a court-issued warrant for the search. It also provides CDCR shall not conduct strip searches, visual body cavity searches, and physical body cavity searches of visitors who are under 18 years of age unless the department has probable cause and obtains a warrant to search. It adds that, if there is probable cause that the visitor is attempting to introduce contraband, unauthorized substances, or other unauthorized items into the institution, CDCR shall notify the visitor and their parent or guardian in writing, and

⁷ Prison Policy Initiative, *Research Roundup: The Positive Impacts of Family Contact for Incarcerated People and Their Families* (Dec. 21, 2021) <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/> (as of Apr. 6, 2026).

the department shall receive written consent from the visitor and their parent or guardian prior to conducting the search. If probable cause exists but the visitor and their parent or guardian do not consent to the visitor being searched, CDCR may offer a noncontact visit, if feasible, or deny the visit.

An unclothed body search is a security procedure that involves visual inspection of a person's body and body cavities with all of the person's clothing removed and a thorough inspection of the person's clothing for the purpose of detecting contraband. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3173.2, subd. (d)(7).) Existing regulations provide that a visitor's body will not be touched by staff during the search. (*Ibid.*) This procedure may be conducted with the visitor's consent when there is a reasonable suspicion that the visitor is carrying contraband and when no less intrusive means are available to conduct the search. (*Ibid.*) Additional screening will occur when an individual sets off the alarm of the metal detector, an individual is selected for additional screening, or an individual has provided documentation to substantiate a condition that precludes successful screening by metal detector. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3173.2, subd. (d)(2).)

Under existing regulations, "Visitors who refuse to submit to an unclothed body search, where probable cause exists, shall have their visiting privileges denied for that day. Future visits may be conditioned upon the visitor's willingness to submit to an unclothed body search prior to being allowed to visit." (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 15, § 3176, subd. (a)(3).)

- 5) **Argument in Support:** According to the *Essie Justice Group*, a co-sponsor of this bill, "Across California prisons, visitation policies are inconsistently applied, poorly defined, and often enforced in ways that are unpredictable and punitive. Families frequently travel long distances, take time off work, and incur significant costs only to have visits shortened, denied, or disrupted based on vague rules or discretionary decisions by staff. There is little transparency or accountability when visits are limited or revoked, leaving families without meaningful recourse.

"These harms fall disproportionately on women and children. Women, particularly Black women, are the primary visitors of incarcerated people and often carry the financial and emotional burden of maintaining family connections. Many are caregivers, navigating work, childcare, and travel logistics in order to sustain relationships with their incarcerated loved ones. Children are especially impacted. Research shows that hundreds of thousands of children in California have an incarcerated parent, and visitation is one of the only ways to maintain critical parent-child bonds. When visits are denied, cut short, or made stressful and unpredictable, children experience confusion, anxiety, and harm. Our members—women with incarcerated loved ones—report facing sexual harassment, degrading searches, intimidation, and retaliation for asserting basic dignity during visits. Women go to great lengths to visit their incarcerated loved one only to be met with a harsh and demeaning process that punishes them for showing up for their incarcerated family members. The grave impacts of these actions are reflected in multiple member accounts.

"Women visiting incarcerated loved ones are routinely required to remove religious headwear, protective hairstyles, wigs, and hair extensions — often in full view of other visitors — just to gain entry. These invasive searches fall disproportionately on Black and brown women in our membership.

“Essie member K (pseudonym) describes waiting up to an hour on multiple occasions for a same-gender officer to inspect her hijab, time that comes directly out of her scheduled visit. On one occasion, she was left with only ten minutes to see her incarcerated loved one. Essie member M (pseudonym) was denied a visit due to the metal underwire in her bra: “being told [by facility staff], ‘you have to do something with that bra, but we don't want those things on the floor,’ after driving 600 miles and then not being allowed in—it makes me not want to visit.”

“Visitation is an issue that underscores the ways women with incarcerated loved ones are directly harmed by mass incarceration. National research shows that 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 2 Black women, have a family member in prison.¹ In listening to countless stories from our members on their experiences inside California prison visiting rooms, we requested Public Records Act data from CDCR State Prisons and found that between January 2014 and October 2025, five state facilities cancelled over 5,000 visits—**women accounted for nearly 78% of all denied visits**. Three Los Angeles County facilities recorded over 2 million visit cancellations during the same time frame.

“Instead of supporting stability and connection, the current system often creates additional trauma. Families are forced to navigate constantly shifting expectations, and even minor or unclear rule violations can result in terminated visits or future restrictions. This undermines the very purpose of visitation, which is to preserve family ties and support successful rehabilitation and reentry.

“AB 2434 addresses these issues by creating clearer statewide standards for visitation, limiting arbitrary denial or interference, and improving transparency and accountability in how visitation policies are implemented. By establishing consistent expectations and reducing discretionary enforcement, the bill ensures that families can engage in visits without fear of sudden disruption or punishment for unclear rules.

“Strengthening visitation is not just about dignity, it is about outcomes. Research consistently shows that maintaining family connections during incarceration reduces disciplinary issues and lowers recidivism, while improving long-term stability for both incarcerated individuals and their families. Ensuring meaningful access to visitation supports children, strengthens families, and promotes safer communities.”

6) **Argument in Opposition:** None submitted

7) **Related Legislation:**

- a) AB 1645 (M. González) would prohibit CDCR regulations from unreasonably restricting nonsexual physical contact between incarcerated persons and their visitors during contact visits. AB 1645 is pending a hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
- b) AB 1646 (Bryan) would provide that all youth confined in a juvenile facility have the right to engage in physical contact with visitors during in-person visits that a reasonable person would find nonsexual and appropriate under the circumstances. AB 1646 is pending a hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

8) **Prior Legislation:**

- a) AB 2709 (Bonta), of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, would have prohibited a sentenced to imprisonment in a state prison or in a county jail for a felony offense from being prevented from receiving personal visits. AB 2709 was held in suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- b) AB 2740 (Waldron), Chapter 738, Statutes of 2024, would have required CDCR, among other things, to expedite a family visitation application process for incarcerated pregnant persons in order to prevent delays for visitation for the incarcerated mother and newborn child following delivery and prohibit limiting family visitation for incarcerated mothers to see their newborn child.
- c) AB 958 (Santiago) of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to AB 990. AB 958 was held in Senate Appropriations Committee.
- d) AB 990 (Santiago), of the 2021-2022 Legislative Session, would have made personal visits a civil right for incarcerated people. AB 990 was vetoed.
- e) SB 1008 (Becker), Chapter 827, Statutes of 2022, requires CDCR to provide voice communication services to incarcerated persons free of charge.
- f) SB 1139 (Kamlager) Chapter 837, Statutes of 2022, requires, among other things, emergency in-person contact visits and video calls to be made available whenever an incarcerated person is hospitalized or moved to a medical unit within the facility and the incarcerated person is in a critical or more serious medical condition.
- g) AB 964 (Medina), of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, would have required all local detention facilities to offer in-person visitation. AB 964 was held on the Assembly Appropriations suspense file.
- h) SB 843 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 33, Statutes of 2016, bars prohibiting incarcerated persons from family visits based solely on the fact that the incarcerated person is sentenced to life without the possibility of parole or is sentenced to life and is without a parole date.
- i) SB 1157 (Mitchell), of the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, would have prohibited local correctional facilities and juvenile facilities from replacing in-person visits with video or other types of electronic visitation. SB 1157 was vetoed.
- j) SCR 20, Chapter 88, Statutes of 2009, encourages correctional facilities to distribute the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights to children of incarcerated parents, and to use the bill of rights as a framework for analysis and determination of procedures when making decisions about services for these children.
- k) AB 2133 (Goldberg), Chapter 238, Statutes of 2002, requires that any amendments to regulations adopted by CDCR which may impact the visitation of incarcerated persons recognize and consider the value of visitation as a means of increasing safety in prisons, maintaining family and community connections, and preparing inmates for successful

release and rehabilitation.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Access Reproductive Justice
ACLU California Action
All of US or None (HQ)
All of US or None Orange County
Anti Police-terror Project
California Coalition for Women Prisoners
California Public Defenders Association
Californians for Safety and Justice (CSJ)
Californians United for a Responsible Budget
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
Courage California
Crop Organization; the
Defy Ventures
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Empowering Women Impacted by Incarceration
Essie Justice Group (UNREG)
F.i.a.t.m. Group INC.
Fair Chance Project
Families Inspiring Reentry & Reunification 4 Everyone (FIR4E)
Felony Murder Elimination Project
Glide
Grace Institute - End Child Poverty in CA
Justice2jobs Coalition
LA Defensa
Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
Milpa Collective
Parenting for Liberation
Pillars of the Community
Prison Policy Initiative
Rubicon Programs
San Francisco Public Defender
San Quentin Skunkworks
Silicon Valley De-bug
Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition
Smart Justice California, a Project of Beyond Impact
Starting Over INC.
The Collective for Liberatory Lawyering
The W. Haywood Burns Institute
Transgender, Gendervariant, Intersex Justice Project
Vera Institute of Justice
13 Private Individuals

Opposition

None Submitted

Analysis Prepared by: Andrew Ironside / PUB. S. / (916) 319-3744