

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2027

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 2478 (Schultz) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Kinship family approval

**SUMMARY:** Establishes a Kinship Family Approval (KFA) process within the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) as a streamlined, separate pathway for relatives, nonrelative extended family members (NREFMs), and extended family members of Indian children to become approved foster care providers. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires CDSS, on or before January 1, 2028, to adopt a KFA process to approve a relative, NREFM, or extended family member of an Indian child to be a kinship family, defined as an individual or family who has successfully met the home environment assessment and family engagement standards necessary for providing care for a child placed by a county child welfare department or a probation department (county) by court order or voluntarily placed by a parent or legal guardian.
- 2) Requires counties to ensure that relatives, NREFMs, and extended family members of an Indian child are provided information regarding available approval processes and the option to choose between the KFA process, the resource family approval (RFA) process, and, in the case of an Indian child, a tribally approved home (TAH).
- 3) Makes confidential certain personal identifying information, written evaluation reports, and court proceedings relating to kinship families, except as specified, and requires the application form signed by a kinship family applicant to include a declaration that the information submitted is true, correct, and contains no material omissions of fact to the best knowledge and belief of the applicant.
- 4) Adds kinship families, as defined, to the list of persons and entities entitled to access pupil records, including records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, online communications on school-established platforms, and individualized education programs, without written parental consent or judicial order.
- 5) Expands the scope of an existing misdemeanor to include any person who willfully and knowingly, with intent to deceive, makes a false statement or fails to disclose a material fact in a KFA application.
- 6) Expands the court's authority to place a child after an order of removal, or on a temporary or emergency basis, in the home of a NREFM or an extended family member, in addition to a relative, as under existing law, regardless of the status of any criminal record exemption, KFA, or RFA, if the court finds the placement does not pose a risk to the health and safety of the child.
- 7) Recasts and revises existing reporting and recommendation provisions enacted by AB 2830 (Rivas), Chapter 417, Statutes of 2024, with the new KFA statutory framework.

- 8) Makes conforming changes across the Education Code, Family Code, Government Code, Health and Safety Code, Insurance Code, Penal Code, Probate Code, and Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) to make provisions currently applicable to resource families also applicable to kinship families, and deletes obsolete provisions.
- 9) Conditions implementation on the continued availability of Title IV-E federal financial participation.
- 10) Makes legislative findings that the provisions of this bill limiting access to writings of public officials and agencies address interests of sufficient weight to justify those limitations, as required by the California Constitution.

**EXISTING LAW:**

## State law:

- 1) States legislative intent to reaffirm its commitment to children who are in out-of-home placement to live in the least restrictive family setting and as close to the child's family as possible, as specified. Further states legislative intent that all children live with a committed, permanent, nurturing family and that services and supports should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual child and family being served, as specified. (WIC § 16000)
- 2) Requires CDSS, in consultation with county child welfare agencies, foster parent associations, and other interested community parties, to implement a unified, family friendly, and child-centered RFA process to replace the existing multiple processes for licensing foster family homes, certifying foster homes by licensed foster family agencies, approving relatives and nonrelative extended family members as foster care providers, and approving guardians and adoptive families. (WIC § 16519.5)
- 3) Requires counties to ensure that a resource family applicant completes a minimum of 12 hours of preapproval caregiver training on certain topics, including, the effects of trauma, grief and loss, child abuse and neglect, child development and behavior, health issues in foster care, permanence, well-being and education needs of children, among others. (WIC § 16519.5(g)(13))
- 4) Requires counties to ensure a resource family's responsibility to act as a reasonable and prudent parent, defined as the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state to participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, and to provide a family setting that promotes normal childhood experiences and that serves the needs of the child. (WIC §§ 362.05(c)(1); 16519.5.(g)(13)(m))
- 5) Requires a social worker to immediately investigate the circumstances of the child being taken into the custody of the dependency system and attempt to maintain the child with the child's family through the provision of services. (WIC § 309(a))

- 6) Requires a social worker to conduct a search within 30 days to locate and identify all relatives of a youth in the child welfare services system. Requires a social worker to provide written notification within 30 days of certain information, as specified. (WIC § 309(e)(1))
- 7) States legislative intent to preserve and strengthen a child's family ties whenever possible and to reunify a foster youth with their biological family whenever possible, or to provide a permanent placement alternative. (WIC § 16000)
- 8) Requires CDSS to provide technical assistance to encourage and facilitate the county placement agency's evaluation of placement needs and the development of needed placement resources and programs. (WIC § 16001.1)
- 9) Requires CDSS to adopt, no later than January 1, 2027, a simplified approval process for relative caregivers consistent with the definition of foster family homes for the purposes of federal Title IV-E eligibility. Requires the simplified approval process for relative and kinship caregivers to be implemented only if and to the extent that federal financial participation is available and after necessary federal approval of state plan amendments has been obtained. (WIC §16519.3(a))
- 10) Authorizes CDSS to convene government-to-government consultation with tribes and communicate with other interested individuals and organizations to develop a simplified approval process for relative and kinship caregivers that achieves the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for children in out-of-home care. Permits the communication to include seeking feedback from relative and kinship caregivers, foster youth, county child welfare and probation agencies, foster family agencies, tribes, tribal organizations, tribal consortia, and other interested community partners. (WIC §16519.3(b))
- 11) Defines “relative” to mean an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words “great,” “great-great,” or “grand” or the spouse of any of these persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. Defines “extended family member” of an Indian child to have the same meaning as defined by the law or custom of the Indian child’s tribe or, in the absence of such law or custom, shall be a person who has reached 18 years of age and who is the Indian child’s grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, niece or nephew, first or second cousin, or stepparent. (WIC § 11400(m) and WIC § 224.1(c))
- 12) Defines for purposes of the KFA process, “relative” or an “extended family member” of an Indian child, to have the same meaning as defined in 11) above. (WIC § 16519.3(c))
- 13) Defines “nonrelative extended family member” to mean an adult caregiver who has an established familial or mentoring relationship with the child, as described. (WIC § 11400(n))
- 14) Requires CDSS to consider using a broader definition of “relative” that includes NREFMs, as defined in 13) above.

Federal law:

- 15) Revised the definition of foster family homes to permit claiming of Title IV-E federal financial participation when the agency uses different licensing or approval standards for

relative or kinship foster family homes and all nonrelative foster family homes. (Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §1355.20)

- 16) Permits agencies to use different standards for relatives than non-relative homes while maintaining federal funding eligibility. (45 CFR § 1355.20)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

**COMMENTS:** This bill only discusses policy issues germane to the Assembly Committee on Human Services.

**Background:** *Resource Family Approval.* The RFA Program, first piloted by AB 340 (Hancock), Chapter 464, Statutes of 2007, and subsequently applied statewide through SB 1013 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012, implemented RFA on January 1, 2017. RFA is a unified, family-friendly, and child-centered process that combines elements of foster parent licensing, relative approval, and adoption and guardianship approval processes. It was designed to replace multiple existing processes for licensing foster homes, approving relatives and NREFMs as foster care providers, and approving adoptive families. RFA is also a route to direct permanency for caregivers who wish to adopt or be guardians of youth in care. A resource family considered eligible to provide foster care for related and unrelated children in out-of-home placement is considered approved for adoption or legal guardianship and does not have to undergo any additional approval or licensure processes.

Part of the RFA process includes comprehensive training requirements for both resource family applicants and approved resource families. Specifically, resource family applicants must undergo 12 hours of preapproval caregiver training on a variety of topics, including an overview of the child protective and probation systems, the effects of trauma on child development, positive discipline and the importance of self-esteem, and health issues in foster care, among others. Approved resource families are required to complete eight hours of annual caregiver training on a variety of topics. Current law also allows a county to require a resource family or applicant to receive relevant specialized training for the purpose of preparing the resource family to meet the needs of a particular child in care.

*Tribally Approved Homes.* Pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal agency is permitted to approve a home for the foster or adoptive placement of an Indian child, although it is not required to do so. These tribally approved homes are not subject to state licensing approval standards, with the exception of requirements related to criminal background checks. Tribes and tribal agencies have the independent authority to approve homes using their own socially and culturally appropriate standards and are not subject to California's RFA requirements.

*Federal Changes.* On September 28, 2023, the federal Administration on Children and Families (ACF) published a final rule regarding separate licensing and approval standards for kinship placements, permitting Title IV-E agencies (states, including specified tribal welfare entities) to claim Title IV-E federal financial participation on behalf of a child who is placed in a relative or kinship licensed or approved foster family home when the agency uses different licensing or approval standards for relative or kinship foster family homes and non-relative or non-kinship foster family homes.

ACF now allows states to adopt different licensing or approval standards for relative or kinship foster family homes and during periodic reviews, states must ensure that children receive equal Foster Care Maintenance Payments regardless of placement type. ACF also aligned the definition of “foster family home” with changes made by the Family First Prevention Services Act and requires the foster parent to reside in the home with the child. ACF encouraged all states to develop standards for relative and kinship foster family homes that impose as few burdens as possible on these families, consistent with ensuring the safety and well-being of children. As a result of these federal changes, California enacted AB 2830 as its own framework to align with these new standards.

*AB 2830 (Robert Rivas), Chapter 417, Statutes of 2024*, required CDSS to adopt, no later than January 1, 2027, a simplified approval process for relative caregivers consistent with the ACF’s guidance, and required CDSS to track and report to the Legislature specified data on implementation. AB 2830 directed CDSS to consult with stakeholders, including advocates representing caregivers and foster youth, county child welfare and probation representatives, foster family agencies, tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia, to develop the simplified process.

AB 2830 created the statutory framework for a simplified approval process for relative caregivers and directed CDSS to develop it. The provisions of *this bill* enact that framework by codifying a comprehensive KFA process and providing the substantive standards, definitions, procedural requirements, and accountability structures that will govern how kinship families are approved going forward.

While AB 2830 directed CDSS to adopt a process “consistent with federal regulations,” *this bill* directly incorporates the federal framework by requiring that the KFA process be consistent with the definition of foster family homes for purposes of Title IV-E eligibility, meaning eligibility for federal reimbursement. The bill defines “kinship family” as an individual or family that has successfully met the home environment assessment and family engagement process standards, a two-part standard less demanding than RFA, which requires both home environment and permanency assessment standards. This aligns with ACF’s encouragement that states reduce approval burdens on kinship families while maintaining child safety.

*This bill* expands the pool of eligible caregivers beyond what AB 2830 contemplated. AB 2830 focused primarily on relatives, with an option for CDSS to expand the definition to include NREFMs, however *this bill* makes that expansion mandatory by requiring the KFA process to be available to relatives, NREFMs, and extended family members of an Indian child. This broader scope provides a streamlined pathway for NREFMs and extended family members who are known and trusted by the child but are not biologically related within the statutory definition of “relative.”

*This bill* requires CDSS, no later than January 1, 2028, to adopt a KFA process in compliance with federal Title IV-E eligibility standards and codifies that process in state law, establishing substantive approval standards, county and CDSS responsibilities, training requirements, and due process protections.

*Criminal Record Clearance and Exemptions.* *This bill* establishes a criminal background check framework for KFA that mirrors the existing RFA structure, rather than creating a separate, more lenient criminal records structure. Under existing law, any person seeking approval to provide

foster care including relatives and NREFMs seeking RFA must obtain a criminal record clearance or exemption.

Current law establishes the categories of offenses for which CDSS may not grant an exemption under any circumstances, including convictions for child abuse or neglect, sexual assault, homicide, and felony convictions for physical assault, battery, or drug- or alcohol-related offenses within the last five years. For offenses outside those crimes, CDSS or the approving county may grant an exemption upon a finding of substantial and convincing evidence that the applicant is of present good character sufficient to justify approval. For relative RFA applicants seeking approval to care for a specific child, existing law provides an additional pathway that permits CDSS or the county to grant an exemption for certain otherwise non-exemptible offenses if the approval is child-specific, the applicant or other adult in the home does not have a felony conviction within the last five years for child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, rape, sexual assault, homicide, or any crime against a child, and the applicant demonstrates present good character under specified factors in existing law. An exemption granted under this pathway is valid only for the child-specific approval and is not transferable to any other placement setting.

*This bill* would establish a KFA process as a distinct alternative to RFA for relatives, NREFMs, and extended family members of an Indian child. With respect to criminal record clearances and exemptions, the bill applies the same exemption framework to KFA applicants as currently applies to RFA applicants including the same disqualifying convictions, the same standard exemption criteria, and the same federal Title IV-E compliant prohibitions. *The bill* also explicitly extends the child-specific exemption pathway to kinship family applicants on the same terms currently available to relative RFA applicants, confirming that counties and CDSS retain authority to grant child-specific exemptions for KFA approvals. The exemption remains non-transferable and child-specific. So while the KFA process does not meaningfully reduce the criminal record burden for kins relative to the existing RFA process, KFA does offer a less burdensome overall approval process.

*Training Requirements.* AB 2830 did not establish specific training requirements for kinship caregivers under the simplified process, leaving that design to CDSS rulemaking. *This bill* directly addresses this by codifying kinship-specific training standards that require approved kinship families to complete a minimum of 12 hours of training no later than 90 days following approval, covering topics including birth parent relationships and the effects of trauma on child development; navigating the child welfare and probation systems; the personal rights of children in foster care; and child and adolescent development, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. Additionally, kinship families must complete a minimum of eight hours of annual caregiver training after initial approval, and must complete CPR and first aid training, or demonstrate equivalent certification, within 90 days of approval. Counties retain the authority to require additional specialized training to meet the needs of a particular child in care.

The training framework under *this bill* mirrors the structure of RFA training requirements but is tailored to the kinship context in that it must be completed after approval rather than before, which reduces the pre-placement barrier for relative and kin caregivers responding to an emergency. The post-approval 90-day window reflects the reality that kinship families frequently are called to step up on short notice and should not be required to complete training before a child can be placed with them.

*This bill* establishes kinship-specific training requirements, including a minimum of 12 hours of post-approval training within 90 days, eight hours of annual training thereafter, and CPR and first aid certification, with counties retaining authority to require specialized training for the needs of a particular child.

*Payments and Rates.* In California, the current funding structure for extended family members and NREFMs is designed to provide parity so they generally receive the same monthly support as licensed foster parents if the home is court-approved and meets specific standards. The provisions of *this bill* seek to ensure financial parity between kinship families and resource families, consistent with the federal final rule's equal Foster Care Maintenance Payment requirement. Children placed with kinship families would be eligible for the resource family basic rate at the child's assessed level of care, and on or after the date specified for the Tiered Rate Structure, the tiered rate applies.

Under current law, NREFMs approved through RFA have fiscal parity but with specific conditions depending on the child's federal eligibility. The level of assistance depends on whether they are federally eligible which provides full benefits, matching the rate paid to other licensed foster parents. If a child does not meet the Title IV-E criteria, NREFMs can still achieve parity through the Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) program.

*This bill* makes conforming changes to Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) eligibility provisions to include kinship families on par with resource families for purposes of federal and state foster care maintenance payment eligibility. The nonfederal share of KFA program costs is apportioned pursuant to the existing county-state sharing ratio.

Under current law, AFDC-FC payments are available for children placed in the home of an approved relative or resource family. *This bill* would expand the placement authority of the court to include NREFMs and extended family members regardless of the status of KFA or RFA, which could create scenarios in which a child is lawfully placed with a caregiver who is not yet eligible for AFDC-FC, leaving the placement without a funding mechanism for the open case period.

*This bill* excludes a mechanism to fund an open dependency case when a child is placed by court order with an NREFM or extended family member who is ineligible for AFDC-FC.

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (Kin-GAP) program provides state-funded aid on behalf of children in kinship care who are not eligible for federally funded Kin-GAP. Under existing law, the definition of "kinship guardian" is limited to persons appointed as legal guardian of a dependent child who are relatives of the child, and the definition of "relative" is narrowly defined as an adult related by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship. This means that a NREFM or extended family member who has been approved as a kinship family under *this bill* and with whom a child has been placed by court order may not be able to access Kin-GAP funding if guardianship becomes the appropriate permanency option, because they do not meet the statutory definition of "kinship guardian." *This bill* excludes a mechanism to fund a kinship guardianship for a court-authorized NREFM or extended family member placement.

Under existing law, the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) requires that the prospective adoptive parent have completed criminal background check requirements pursuant to federal

law. When RFA has been denied due to a federally non-exemptible conviction, meaning an exemption cannot be granted under federal standards, the caregiver may fall outside the AAP eligibility criteria, leaving no mechanism to fund the adoption even where the court has found the placement to be in the child's best interest.

The ARC Program is the primary structure for relatives and NREFMs who care for children who are not eligible for federal foster care (Title IV-E) funding. ARC provides a monthly per-child payment equal to the basic foster care rate paid to traditional foster homes (AFDC-FC). This program was created to close the funding gap where relatives previously received much lower CalWORKs payments compared to non-relative foster parents. ARC is an optional program for counties, though most California counties have opted-in to ensure caregivers receive full support. To receive these standardized rates, the home must be a Resource Family, which means they have received RFA, which is a process for all caregivers, whether they are relatives, NREFMs, or unrelated foster parents.

If a child is placed with a relative or NREFM on an emergency basis before the full RFA process is finished, they may still qualify for Emergency Caretaker funding for up to 120 days (or up to 365 days with good cause) while their application is pending.

Because NREFMs are legally treated as non-relatives, they may be eligible for Federal Title IV-E foster care payments if the child meets federal criteria. If not, they are supported through state and county foster care funds at the same rate as traditional foster parents. Relatives follow the same path but specifically utilize the ARC program if the child is not Title IV-E eligible. If the case moves from foster care to a legal guardianship with a relative, the funding typically transitions to the Kin-GAP program which is designed to match the child's foster care rate to ensure financial stability once the court case officially closes to guardianship.

*Insurance.* This bill makes conforming amendments to the Insurance Code to prohibit homeowners' and tenants' insurance carriers from refusing to issue or canceling coverage solely because an applicant or policyholder is an approved kinship family, consistent with existing protections for resource families and licensed foster homes. Conforming changes extend the Foster Family Home and Small Family Home Insurance Fund's coverage to kinship families for eligible claims.

*KFA Process.* The KFA process is designed to reduce barriers that have historically prevented children from being placed with kin by streamlining the approval standards applicable to relatives and NREFMs. Unlike RFA, which requires applicants to meet both a home environment assessment and a permanency assessment, the latter of which evaluates the family's capacity to provide long-term permanency for a child, KFA replaces the permanency assessment with a family engagement standard, reflecting that the nature of a kin relationship differs fundamentally from that of a non-related foster placement. Counties are required to inform relatives and NREFMs of both options and allow them to choose, meaning kin who do not intend to adopt or provide legal guardianship, or who may not meet the full RFA permanency criteria, can still be approved to care for a child. As it relates to evaluating criminal records, the RFA process does not lower the substantive clearance bar but does confirm that the child-specific exemption pathway is available to KFA applicants, providing the same flexibility that relative RFA applicants already have to seek an exemption for certain offenses when the approval is tied to a specific child.

CDSS prioritizes a kin-first culture which they define as “as an environment in which systems serving children and families adopt policies and practices that prioritize keeping children safely at home whenever possible and, when removal is necessary, placing them with family or trusted adults who can maintain connections to community, culture, and tribe.”

Research consistently shows that children placed with familiar caregivers experience better outcomes, including greater placement and educational stability, higher likelihood of reuniting with siblings, and improved mental and behavioral health. Youth in kinship placements are more likely to be employed or enrolled in higher education and are less likely to experience homelessness and incarceration.

When the RFA process was implemented, the goal was to unify a previous patchwork system of foster care approval processes. Currently, all foster care provider applicants are subject to the same RFA process regardless of their relationship with the child, which streamlines processes for all caregivers. However, this standardized process can subject kin caregivers to unnecessary administrative barriers that create undue delays, which sometimes prevent children from being placed with kin altogether. The RFA was largely designed for licensed foster parents and does not fully reflect the needs of relatives and other trusted adults who step forward during a family crisis.

The provisions of *this bill* preserve RFA as a parallel option that kinship caregivers may choose if they prefer full RFA approval, which carries broader eligibility for placements of unrelated children and is the pathway currently used by foster family agencies.

**Author’s Statement:** According to the Author, “Despite officially embracing a “kin-first” culture that prioritizes placing children with family or trusted adults in a child's life, California currently utilizes a one-size-fits-all foster care approval process that can create unnecessary administrative burdens for a child's kin. Research has consistently and resoundingly shown that children experience a wide range of better outcomes when placed with familiar caregivers, including greater placement and educational stability, higher likelihood of reuniting with siblings, and improved mental and behavioral health. California's current system, the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process, was largely designed for licensed foster parents and does not fully reflect the needs of relatives and other trusted adults who step forward during a family crisis. Administrative burdens and irrelevant requirements can create undue delays for placing a child in the safest and most supportive setting possible. To address these unacceptable delays and promote the resounding benefits of kinship care, the legislature enacted AB 2830 (Rivas) to direct the California Department of Social Services to develop policy improvements to strengthen kinship placement pathways.

“[This bill] follows through on these improvements by creating the Kinship Family Approval (KFA) pathway, a streamlined approval framework for kin caregivers. This pathway is designed specifically to recognize that caregivers with pre-existing meaningful relationships with a child should not face unnecessary regulatory barriers designed for traditional foster homes. This legislation additionally clarifies emergency placement rules, allows agencies to access Title IV-E federal funding that encourages the creation of separate kinship approval pathways, and extends the eligibility of very limited criminal record exemptions to a wider range of kin so that children can be placed quickly with safe caregivers who are familiar to them. By reducing administrative delays and strengthening family-first placement policies, [this bill will maximize kin placements while remaining unwavering in safeguards that secure the safety and stability of a caregiver's

home. The KFA pathway will ensure children are more efficiently given a sense of stability, consistency, and permanency with a caregiver that will keep them connected to their communities and culture.”

**Equity Implications:** The provisions of *this bill* require counties to ensure that relatives, NREFMs, and extended family members of an Indian child are affirmatively provided information about all available approval pathways, including the KFA process, the RFA process, and, for Indian children, the TAH pathway.

Many prospective kinship caregivers are low-income families of color, are from underserved rural areas, or are members of communities where long-term systemic factors such as poverty create barriers to meeting the more stringent RFA standards. Separate approval standards for kinship families are particularly important for underserved groups that traditionally rely more heavily on kin and family in times of need. By establishing a parallel approval pathway with streamlined home environment and family engagement standards rather than the full permanency assessment required by RFA, *this bill* seeks to remove structural barriers without compromising child safety. *The bill* also preserves the TAH pathway for Indian children and requires counties to affirmatively inform all prospective caregivers of their choice among the kinship family approval process, the RFA process, and, where applicable, the TAH pathway.

Children in kinship care, rather than non-kinship care, have better outcomes including greater placement stability, lower rates of re-abuse and institutional abuse, better behavioral and mental health, and a higher likelihood of achieving permanency, and this bill creates a structure for these outcomes to happen more frequently.

**Policy Considerations:** This bill contains a significant policy shift by creating a separate pathway for nonrelatives to become approved foster care providers. Rather than modifying the existing RFA process, this bill establishes a different pathway that reflects the emphasis on a kin-first culture as it relates to appropriately placing foster youth. While most of the provisions mirror the existing processes and funding aspects for RFA, there are still significant details that need to be addressed before this policy can be considered complete.

*Should this bill move forward, the Author may wish to consider providing clarity on the following implementation issues:*

- Kin-GAP program alignment with the broader definition of eligible caregivers established under this bill and that the pathway to permanent guardianship carries a funding mechanism regardless of whether the caregiver qualifies as a “relative” under the existing Kin-GAP definition.
- Alignment of the court’s expanded placement authority and the existing funding framework.
- Identification of a funding mechanism for adoptions when RFA has been denied due to a federally non-exemptible conviction, but the court has authorized placement.
- Impact of exclusion of FFAs from conducting KFAs.

**Double referral:** Should this bill pass out of this Committee, it will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary.

**Arguments in Support:** The California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association writes that this bill “helps ensure that children entering foster care remain connected to the people and communities that matter most to them.”

**Arguments in Opposition:** None on file.

**RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:**

*AB 2830 (Rivas), Chapter 417, Statutes of 2024*, required CDSS to adopt a simplified approval process for relative caregivers by January 1, 2027, conditioned on federal financial participation, and required CDSS to recommend statutory changes for full implementation by September 30, 2026.

*SB 354 (Skinner), Chapter 687, Statutes of 2021*, adopted changes to the criminal background check process during RFA for relatives; permitted court authorization of relative placements regardless of criminal exemption or RFA status; required CDSS to report on criminal record exemptions.

*AB 366 (Blanca Rubio), Chapter 581, Statutes of 2021*, adopted changes to the sibling placement provisions within the child welfare system.

*SB 407 (Wiener), Chapter 226, Statutes of 2023*, required resource families to demonstrate ability and willingness to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth with its own definition, approval standards, training requirements, due process procedures, and oversight structure.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

Alliance for Children's Rights (Co-Sponsor)  
Children's Law Center of California (Co-Sponsor)  
Children's Legal Services of San Diego (Co-Sponsor)  
County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)  
California Alliance of Caregivers  
California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association  
Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake  
Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, INC  
Public Counsel  
Seneca Family of Agencies

**Opposition**

None on file.

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