

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Darshana R. Patel, Chair
AB 2524 (Gipson) – As Amended March 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Pupils: work permits: juvenile court

SUMMARY: Authorizes juvenile court judges to issue work permits to minors involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that work permits are issued in a timely manner by a juvenile court to minors under the jurisdiction of the court.
- 2) Authorizes a presiding judge of a juvenile court to issue a work permit to any of the following:
 - a) A minor who is a ward of the court pursuant to Section 601 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC);
 - b) A minor who is a dependent of the court pursuant to Section 300 of WIC; and
 - c) A minor placed in suitable out-of-home care under the supervision of a probation department or child development agency.
- 3) Requires the work permit issued to meet all of the following:
 - a) Be issued only upon the finding that employment is in the best interest of the minor;
 - b) Include all of the information currently required for work permits issued by school districts; and
 - c) Be recognized by school districts, employers, and state agencies as valid.
- 4) Specifies that these provisions do not limit the authority of school districts to issue work permits to minors enrolled in the school district.
- 5) Other technical changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Prohibits any person, firm or corporation from employing any minor under the age of 18 years to work in or in connection with any establishment or occupation without a permit to employ, issued by the proper educational officers, and in accordance with law. (Education Code (EC) 49160)
- 2) Requires the notification of the intent to employ a minor to contain:
 - a) The name, address, phone number, and social security number of the minor;
 - b) The name, address, phone number, and supervisor at the minor's place of employment;

- c) The kind of work the minor will perform;
 - d) The maximum number of hours per day and per week the student will be expected to work for the employer; and
 - e) The signatures of the parent or guardian, of the minor, and of the employer. (EC 49163)
- 3) Provides that specified school district, charter school, and private school officials may issue a minor a work permit if requested by the minor's parent, guardian, foster parent, or caregiver. Any principal issuing a work permit must provide a self-certification that he or she understands the requirements in existing law for issuing a work permit and submit a copy of each work permit he or she issues along with a copy of the application for each work permit to the superintendent of the school district in which the school is located. (Education Code (EC) 49110)
 - 4) Specifies that a permit to work may be issued to any minor over the age of 12 years and under the age of 18 years to be employed on a school holiday or during the regular vacation of the school. (EC 49111)
 - 5) Authorizes the provision of a work permit to a minor who has completed the equivalent of the 7th grade to work outside of school hours for not more than three hours per day on days when school is in session if the minor is 14 or 15 years of age; four hours per day if the minor is 16 or 17 years of age; or for a minor who is 16 years or older, up to eight hours in any day which is immediately prior to a non-school day. (EC 49112)
 - 6) Authorizes the attendance supervisor of any school district in which a place of employment is situated, or the probation officer of the county, to at any time enter into the place of employment for the purpose of examining permits to work for minors employed, for the purpose of investigating violations of the Labor (LAB) Code or the EC provisions. (EC 48246)
 - 7) Prohibits any employer employing a minor 16 or 17 years of age for more than 8 hours in one day or more than 48 hours in one week. (LAB 1391)
 - 8) Provides that any person employing either directly or indirectly through third persons, or who employs, or permits any minor to be employed in violation of the law, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and subject to a fine of \$1,000 to \$5,000 or imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months, or both. (LAB 1303)
 - 9) Requires employers who are employing minors directly or indirectly through third persons to maintain files of all work and employment permits and certificates issued, and to make this available at all times to inspection by school attendance and probation officers, the State Board of Education, and officers of the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. (LAB1299)
 - 10) Provides that if a minor between 12 years of age and 17 years of age, inclusive, has four or more trancies within one school year, as defined, or a school attendance review board or probation officer determines that the available public and private services are insufficient or inappropriate to correct the habitual truancy of the minor, or to correct the minor's persistent

or habitual refusal to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities, or if the minor fails to respond to directives of a school attendance review board or probation officer or to services provided, the minor is then within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge the minor to be a ward of the court. (Welfare and Institutions Code. (WIC) 601)

11) Provides, generally, that a minor who is between 12 years of age and 17 years of age, inclusive, when the minor violates any law defining a crime, is subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and to adjudication as a ward. (WIC 602)

12) Establishes the juvenile court with jurisdiction over children who are subject to abuse or neglect. (WIC 300)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “AB 2524 confronts a harsh reality: foster youth and justice-involved youth are often denied work permits due to school requirements they cannot meet because of instability, trauma, and lack of support. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and crime simply to survive. By allowing judicial officers to issue work permits in a youth’s best interest; while tying them to educational progress or job training participation, this bill creates a pathway to lawful employment, stability, and accountability. AB 2524 empowers youth with opportunity, reduces recidivism, and helps break cycles of poverty and exploitation.”

Purpose of current work permit system. According to the CDE, minors employed in the state of California must have a Permit to Employ and Work (commonly referred to as a “work permit”). Work permits are typically issued by the school where the student is enrolled. Work permits indicate the duties and location where the work will be done as well as the number of hours a minor may work. In most cases it is a two-step process, the minor along with the parent/guardian and employer fill out the form and submit to the school local to the minor's address. The school district reviews the B1-1 form and issues the work permit.

The current system has protective laws in place that regulate the times at which the minor may work (not too early and not late at night nor overnight) and the duration of the employment (not too many hours). All of these laws are in place to prevent exploitation of minors and ensure the minor is able to attend school and graduate.

The minor’s work assignment is subject to monitoring by the school attendance, probation, and labor/safety officials to protect the health and safety of the minor and to ensure the employer is complying with all relevant labor laws. Inspectors visit a given address and match each minor on the property to a work permit that is to be made available for inspection at that physical location.

Barriers to gaining work experience among foster youth. The author’s office notes that “because work permits are a mandatory prerequisite to employment, and because foster youth often lack a consistent parent, school placement, or authorized signatory, the current system creates a structural barrier to lawful employment. Research demonstrates that work permit systems are effective when accessible; however, fragmented authorization processes prevent foster youth from obtaining permits. Allowing juvenile or dependency courts to issue or

authorize work permits would centralize authority in the one entity with continuous jurisdiction over the youth, thereby removing administrative barriers and increasing workforce participation.”

A 2022 report by Children Now, *Employment and Youth with Foster Care Experience: Understanding Barriers and Supporting Success*, notes the following:

Employment is foundational to young people’s successful transition into adulthood, yet many youth with lived experience in the foster care system struggle to obtain employment that provides a living wage. Youth with foster care experience typically do not have the same contacts and connections to employment opportunities as youth who have not been in foster care and cannot rely on the economic support of their family. In addition, transition age youth currently or formerly in foster care are more likely to be unemployed than their peers, and when employed, they typically earn less than their peers. Therefore, transition age youth with foster care experience need additional supports and resources to secure and maintain employment during their transition into adulthood.

A longitudinal study of youth formerly in California’s foster care found that at age 23, two years after leaving the child welfare system, only 55% of respondents were currently employed working 10 or more hours per week compared to 75% of their non-foster peers. Additionally, nearly 60% of the young people in the study earned an annual income below the federal poverty level compared to 46% of their non-foster peers. (Courtney, 2021)

For youth formerly in foster care work experience before the age of 18 has been shown to have a significant impact on employment at the age of 24. (Stewart, 2014) Yet, many transition age youth currently or formerly in foster care have limited work history due to the challenges of working while they are in foster care. For instance, youth in foster care may not have a caring adult to teach them how to seek out and apply for employment, or they may have changed placements multiple times, making it difficult to maintain a job. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to build work and volunteer experience and to develop the soft skills that employers value. They also face barriers to accessing the documents and resources that are needed to facilitate employment. For example, when children are removed from their home, their biological family may retain their vital documents, such as birth certificates or Social Security cards, which may then be difficult for a young person to obtain. (Children Now, 2022)

Recommended Committee Amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Require that, if the minor is enrolled in school, the school be notified when a judicial officer issues a work permit to that student, to allow the school to monitor student’s grades, attendance as is the norm for students receiving work permits through their school.
- 2) Authorize schools to revoke a work permit issued by a judicial officer and require the school to provide written notice of the revocation of the permit to the judicial officer within 60 days.
- 3) Authorize tribal courts to issue a work permit to a minor who is an Indian child, as defined, who is under the jurisdiction of a tribal court.

Arguments in support. The Alameda County Office of Education writes, “Currently, students under the age of 18 must obtain work permits through school officials, who typically require consistent enrollment, regular attendance, and a minimum 2.0 GPA. For justice-involved and foster youth navigating housing instability and a lack of adult support, these prerequisites can create barriers to obtaining a work permit. As a result, many vulnerable youth are barred from lawful employment.

Justice-involved and foster youth face a significantly higher risk of negative outcomes when they lack access to legitimate income. When local and state decisionmakers block pathways to lawful work, they inadvertently create the conditions that lead to delinquency. These barriers contradict reentry best practices, child welfare permanency planning, and youth violence prevention strategies.

By authorizing judges and judicial officers to issue work permits for minors under the court’s jurisdiction, including delinquent and dependency youth, AB 2524 would provide an alternative pathway for these vulnerable youth to obtain work permits and access lawful employment.”

Related legislation. AB 640 (Lee) of the 2023-24 Session, would have authorized an employer intending to employ a minor to work exclusively online to provide the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the employer’s website as an address in the notification to a school administrator of the intent to employ the minor. This bill was held in the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee.

AB 800 (Ortega) Chapter 271, Statutes of 2023 designates the week of each year that includes April 28 as "Workplace Readiness Week" and requires all public high schools to observe that week; requires schools to provide information to students in grades 11 and 12 on labor rights included in the history-social science curriculum framework; and requires schools to provide students seeking a work permit with a document that clearly explains basic labor rights, as specified.

SB 1351 (Durazo) of the 2021-22 Session, would have established the California Youth Apprenticeship Program within the Division of Apprenticeship Standards upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purpose of awarding grant funds to eligible youth applicants to provide funding for existing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs or to develop new apprenticeship programs that serve specified youth populations, including individuals from 16 to 24 years of age who are at risk of disconnection or are disconnected from the education system or employment, unhoused, in the child welfare, juvenile justice, or criminal justice system, live in concentrated poverty, or face barriers to labor market participation. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 565 (Lackey) Chapter 194, Statutes of 2021, requires among other things, the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship to create a subcommittee to study and report on issues related to the participation of homeless youth and foster youth in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships and requires that the findings and recommendations of the subcommittee be included in specified reports to the Legislature.

SB 1428 (McGuire) Chapter 420, Statutes of 2018, prohibits a school from denying a work permit for a minor on the basis of the pupil's grades, grade point average, or school attendance, if the permit would allow the pupil to participate in a government-administered employment and

training program that will occur during the regular summer vacation of the school that the pupil attends.

SB 702 (McGuire) Chapter 775, Statutes of 2016, extends a Lake County-specific exemption of child labor law that allows minors to work during the peak agricultural season when school is not in session.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alameda County Office of Education

Opposition

None on file

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