

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Ash Kalra, Chair  
AB 2684 (Nguyen) – As Amended April 15, 2026

PROPOSED CONSENT

**SUBJECT:** JUVENILES: NONMINOR DEPENDENTS: OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT: VISITATION

**KEY ISSUE:** SHOULD A NONMINOR DEPENDENT IN AN OUT OF STATE PLACEMENT BE ABLE TO REQUEST A VIRTUAL VISIT FOR PURPOSES OF THEIR MONTHLY VISITS WITH A CASE WORKER?

**SYNOPSIS**

*Existing law requires all minors and youth in foster care to receive monthly visits from a social worker. Some foster youth who are transitioning out of the foster care system into adulthood may be in a variety of home settings out of state, such as attending college or living with relatives. Under existing law, these foster youth are still required to complete the monthly meeting in person. This bill would allow a nonminor dependent (NMD) to request to complete the monthly visit virtually, consistent with recent changes to federal law. The bill would still require the social worker to complete a quarterly in person visit and would maintain important confidentiality requirements.*

*This bill is sponsored by the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) and is supported by the California Alliance of Caregivers, the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, and the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC). There is no known opposition. This bill was previously heard by the Assembly Committee on Human Services where it was approved unanimously.*

**SUMMARY:** Allows social workers or probation officers to conduct virtual monthly visits with nonminor dependents who are placed out of state. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires social workers or probation officers to allow nonminor dependents who are placed out of state the option to have their monthly visit through a virtual visit. Defines “virtual visit” to mean a real-time audiovisual interaction between the social worker or probation officer and the nonminor dependent.
- 2) Authorizes a virtual visit if the nonminor dependent provides informed consent to meet with the social worker or probation officer through a virtual visit. Requires the virtual visit and consent to be documented by the caseworker in the case plan.
- 3) Requires the virtual visit to include a private discussion between the nonminor dependent and the social worker or probation officer that is not conducted in the presence or immediate vicinity of a foster parent or caregiver, unless the nonminor dependent requests otherwise. Prohibits the content of the discussion to be disclosed to a foster parent or caregiver, subject to the following exceptions:

- a) The social worker or probation officer believes that the nonminor dependent may be in danger of harming themselves or others;
  - b) The social worker or probation officer believes that disclosure is necessary to meet the needs of the nonminor dependent;
  - c) The nonminor dependent consents to disclosure of the information.
- 4) Requires virtual visits to include video capability for both the social worker or probation officer and nonminor dependent. Requires the social worker or probation officer to make a second attempt within two business days if there is an unforeseen technical issue that prevents the video feed from functioning on the day of the virtual visit.
  - 5) Requires the location of the monthly visits for each nonminor dependent who is placed out of state by a county welfare department or county probation department to comply with federal requirements as specified.
  - 6) Requires the social worker or probation officer to document in the case file and in the court report the location of the visit and the reason for the visit if the visit does not occur in the place of residence.
  - 7) Requires the social worker or probation officer to perform an in-person visit instead of the planned virtual visit if the nonminor dependent makes a request to change a planned virtual visit to an in-person visit at least five business days prior to the scheduled visit. Requires the social worker or probation officer to accommodate the request for an in-person visit as soon as possible and authorizes them to consult with their supervisor to ensure timely arrangements, including assigning another social worker or probation officer if necessary to complete the in-person visit.
  - 8) Prohibits anything in the section from being construed to limit the nonminor dependent's right to request an in-person visit at any time.
  - 9) Authorizes the social worker or probation officer to shift a virtual visit to an in-person visit if the social worker or probation officer has any concerns regarding the safety or well-being of the nonminor dependent. Requires the rationale for the change to be explained to the nonminor dependent and be clearly documented in the case plan.
  - 10) Requires the social worker or probation officer to, at a minimum, conduct an in-person visit with the nonminor dependent on a quarterly basis.
  - 11) Excludes a nonminor dependent placed in an out-of-state residential facility from the bill's provisions.
  - 12) Requires the section to be implemented only to the extent permitted by federal law and prohibits the provisions from being construed to reduce the percentage of required in-residence visits for purposes of federal compliance.
  - 13) Requires the department to convene a working group no later than July 1, 2027, to develop guidelines for county placing agencies and attorneys representing nonminor dependents related to engaging and supporting nonminor dependents who are placed out of state.

- 14) Requires the guidelines to be developed with input from stakeholders, including youth with lived experience, developmental experts, attorneys representing youth in foster care between 14 and 21 years of age, representatives from county placing agencies, representatives from behavioral health service providers, and representatives from Medi-Cal managed plans.
- 15) Requires the guidelines to be developmentally appropriate and include guidance on all of the following:
  - a) Assessing youth safety and well-being during a virtual visit;
  - b) Ensuring confidential and youth-centered communication during a virtual visit;
  - c) Ensuring that informed consent for virtual visits from nonminor dependents is meaningful and developmentally appropriate;
  - d) Engagement, well-being, and connection to supportive adults and community resources for nonminor dependents;
  - e) A proposed process to gather regular and ongoing feedback from nonminor dependents on the quality of in-person and virtual casework visits.
- 16) Requires the department to convene stakeholders, including representatives of the training entities for county placement agencies, no later than July 1, 2027 and contingent upon an appropriation for this purpose, to develop best practices in casework practices to support and promote the healthy adult development of nonminor dependents. Requires the department to utilize this input to develop and deliver training, and possibly other means of support, for county placing agencies to promote optimal casework practices when serving nonminor dependents.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires youth in foster care to be visited by a caseworker at least once every calendar month, and for the majority of the visits to be in the residence of the foster youth. Requires the caseworker to comply with data reporting requirements that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) deems necessary to comply with federal law. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16501.1 (l).)
- 2) Requires all foster youth who are placed in group homes to be visited at least monthly by a caseworker. Prohibits the private discussion from being held in the presence of or immediate vicinity of the group home staff. (WIC Section 16516.5.)
- 3) Requires, at least once every six months, at the time of a regularly scheduled placement agency contact with the foster youth, and at each placement change, the foster youth's caseworker to inform the youth, the care provider, and the child and family team, if applicable, of the their rights as a foster youth, as specified in existing law, and is required to provide a written copy of the rights to the youth as part of the explanation. Requires the caseworker to provide the information in a manner appropriate to the age or developmental level of the youth. Requires the caseworker to document in the case plan that they have informed the youth of, and have provided the youth with a written copy of, their rights. (WIC Section 16501.1 (g)(4).)

- 4) Specifies that if a foster youth has been placed out of state, each status review to ensure consistent oversight of their placement shall also address whether the out-of-state placement continues to be the most appropriate placement selection and in the best interests of the child. (WIC Section 366 (c).)
- 5) Establishes the framework for the six-month status review hearings required for nonminor dependents (NMD). Reinforces that the rights and protections afforded to minors, including regular visitation, apply to those in extended foster care. (WIC Section 366.31.)
- 6) Establishes the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children in statute to promote appropriate jurisdictional arrangements for the care of children and specifies that the sending agency (the California county) remains legally and financially responsible for the foster youth. Defines an "out-of-state residential facility" to mean a facility that is located in a state outside of California, is licensed or otherwise approved by the applicable state or tribal authority, and provides an integrated program of specialized and intensive care and supervision, services and supports, treatment, and short-term, 24-hour, trauma-informed care and supervision to children. An out-of-state residential facility may be called another name, including a group home, a residential treatment facility, or a residential care treatment facility. (Family Code Sections 7900-7913.)
- 7) Requires, under the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Act), state child welfare plans to include standards for the content and frequency of caseworker visits to ensure that foster youth are visited at least once every month. Requires these visits to ensure a foster youth's safety, permanency, and well-being. Establishes requirements for the location of the visits and stipulates that the majority of the monthly visits must occur in the foster youth's residence. (42 U.S.C. Sections 622 (b)17, 624 (f)(2)(A).)
- 8) Established the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to provide the option for states to extend the definition of a "child" to include individuals up to 21 years of age for foster care assistance. (2 U.S.C. Section 675 (8)(B).)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

**COMMENTS:** Existing law requires foster youth to receive monthly visits from social workers in order to ensure the foster youth's safety and well-being. Additionally, monthly visits are intended to evaluate the minor's progress towards their permanency plan, their long-term goals, and whether their case plan needs to be reevaluated in any way. Existing law also requires the social worker to have a private discussion with the foster child during each regular visit.

In 2010, the Legislature established the Extended Foster Care program via AB 12 (Beall), Chap. 559, Stats. 2010. Through Extended Foster Care, foster youth who would otherwise age out of eligibility for services may continue to access certain services until 21 in order to allow for them to more smoothly transition into adult life. In order to participate, a foster youth must generally have been in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and meet at least one of five potential criteria, such as enrollment in school, employment, or diagnosis of certain medical conditions that prevent them from returning to school or working.

Once enrolled in extended foster care, some NMDs move out of state, including to attend college or for work placements, and live in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) such as

an apartment, shared home, or dorm. An NMD may also live with relatives or nonrelative extended family members (NREFMs) who live out of state.

Under existing law, these youth are still required to conduct monthly visits with their social worker. In 2024, Congress passed H.R.9076, the Supporting America's Children and Families Act. As part of that Act, federal law now authorizes caseworkers to conduct virtual monthly visits for NMDs with their consent. Recognizing the potential for modernization and greater efficiency, *this bill* aligns state law with federal law to allow a youth in extended foster care who is living out of state to request to complete their monthly visits virtually. Importantly, the bill would still require the social worker to complete an in-person visit at least quarterly and maintains the same confidentiality requirements in existing law for in person visits. Additionally, the bill would not authorize virtual visits for foster youth who are placed in an out of state residential facility that is licensed to provide integrated programs of specialized 24-hour trauma-informed care, and would continue to require in-person visits for youth in these placements. According to the author:

California's Extended Foster Care (EFC) is a beneficial program that supports our foster youth as they transition into adulthood. It ensures they meet their long-term goals and are adequately supported. AB 2684 modernizes California's EFC program by aligning it with federal law to allow non-minor dependents the option of conducting virtual monthly meetings with their social worker while maintaining quarterly in-person meetings.

AB 2684 seems a common sense measure that could significantly improve the experience of NMDs who are living out of state.

***ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:*** This bill is sponsored by the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) and is supported by the California Alliance of Caregivers, the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, and the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC). In support of the measure CWDA submits:

Under existing California law, social workers must conduct in-person monthly visits with NMDs, regardless of where they are living. For youth who move out of the state, often to attend college or live with family, this requirement creates logistical challenges for counties and limits the autonomy of NMDs. This impacts approximately 300 NMDs currently living outside California, who are navigating the challenges of being a young adult in addition to the challenges of being a foster youth.

Recent federal law changes under the Supporting America's Children and Families Act (P.L. 118-258), permits virtual monthly caseworker visits for foster youth aged 18 to 21 who consent. This shift reflects both advancements in virtual communication technologies and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, when child welfare agencies gained significant experience conducting monthly remote visits, developing best practices for maintaining confidentiality, youth engagement, and safety checks across distance.

AB 2684 aligns California law with this new federal flexibility by authorizing NMDs living out of state to choose virtual monthly visits. This bill requires informed consent from the NMD, documentation of that consent in the case plan, and ongoing opportunities for youth to request in-person visits at any time. It also maintains a requirement for at least quarterly in-person visits, ensuring continued oversight and relationship-building. In addition, AB 2684 directs the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop guidance and best

practices to help counties support NMDs placed out of state, promote access to supportive adults and community resources, and to provide training to counties to strengthen casework practices.

AB 2684 modernizes visitation requirements to better reflect current federal policy and real-world practice. This bill promotes flexibility, strengthens caseworker relationships, and supports continued efforts to support older foster youth in their transition journey.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

County Welfare Directors Association of California (sponsor)  
California Alliance of Caregivers  
California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association  
Chief Probation Officers' of California (CPOC)

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Manuela Boucher-de la Cadena / JUD. / (916) 319-2334