

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

CSA1 Bill Id:AB 741 Author:(Ransom)

As Amended Ver:July 14, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to monitor the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) and notify the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program if a child abuse investigation record involving a CASA employee or volunteer is added to the CACI, and allows the DOJ to increase the fee for a CASA candidate's state and federal criminal history background check, as specified, sufficient to cover the cost of processing subsequent child abuse investigation notifications from the CACI.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Mandates, instead of allows, a designated CASA program to submit fingerprint images and related information of employment and volunteer candidates for the purpose for conducting state and federal background checks.
- 2) Eliminates the existing requirement that CASA obtain state or federal level convictions, or state or federal level arrests for which the DOJ establishes that the applicant was released on bail or on their own recognizance pending trial. Requests for federal level criminal offender record information received by the DOJ shall be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the DOJ.
- 3) Requires a CASA program to notify DOJ to terminate notification for a specific individual if the CASA program knows that the individual is no longer in a position for which notification is required and mandates DOJ thereafter terminate notification.
- 4) States that not less than every six months, a CASA program must verify that each individual for whom notification has not been terminated is still in a position with the CASA program.
- 5) Mandates if a CASA program receives a subsequent notification for an individual unknown to the CASA program or for whom the CASA program terminated notification, it shall immediately inform the DOJ that the individual is unknown to the CASA program or that it terminated the notification request for the individual.
- 6) Eliminates from the existing definition of designated CASA program, as specified, a program that as adopted and adheres to the guidelines established by the Judicial Council and which has been designated by the local presiding juvenile court judge to recruit, screen, select, train, supervise, and support lay volunteers to be appointed by the court to help define the best interests of children in juvenile court dependency and wardship proceedings.

COMMENTS

As passed by the Assembly: This bill required the Department of Justice (DOJ) to monitor the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) and notify the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program if a child abuse investigation record involving a CASA employee or volunteer is added to the CACI, and allows the DOJ to increase the fee for a CASA candidate's criminal history

information sufficient to cover the cost of processing subsequent child abuse investigation notifications from the CACI.

According to the Author

"Currently, California's Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) does not provide subsequent screening notices of potential wrongdoing to any agency other than the Department of Social Services. Thus, all personnel associated with a CASA program must be re-fingerprinted every four years to ensure that they can continue their work with children. This procedure delays vital information that could be used by a CASA program to prevent harm to a child if a volunteer or staff member is alleged to have hurt a child. Further, it is a financial expense and an administrative burden to the local CASA programs.

"In California, local CASA programs receive notices from the Department of Justice, the FBI, and the Department of Motor Vehicles of any changes in the background screening results of any volunteer (CASA and Board Member) and staff member. Often called the "rap back," these notices allow the CASA program to immediately investigate the suitability of any volunteer or staff member to continue working with children.

"However, currently local programs do not receive such notices from the California Child Abuse Central Index (CACI). In fact, California Penal Code Section 11170 restricts the receipt of subsequent responses for CACI information to the California Department of Social Services only, thus leaving CASA programs without this crucial safeguard.

"The safety, protection, and well-being of children in foster care is paramount, and thus it is imperative to extend subsequent notices for CACI information to CASA programs in California. Primarily, this change will enhance child safety, but it will also reduce the financial and administrative burdens on the 44 local CASA programs serving California courts. By taking these steps, we can further strengthen the state's commitment to safeguarding these most vulnerable individuals: the children and youth in California's foster care system."

Arguments in Support

According to the *California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association* "California's 44 CASA programs serve as a critical safety net for children in foster care, ensuring that they have a dedicated advocate to support their best interests. Before serving, all CASA volunteers, Board members, and staff undergo rigorous background checks, including fingerprinting through the Department of Justice, the FBI, and CACI. However, unlike other screening agencies, CACI does not provide CASA programs with subsequent notification of new entries related to child abuse allegations, which creates an unnecessary gap in child protection.

"Currently, CASA programs must re-fingerprint every staff member, Board member, and volunteer every four years to ensure they remain eligible to work with children. This process:

- 1) Delays critical information that could be used to protect children from potential harm.
- 2) Imposes financial and administrative burdens on CASA programs and state agencies processing nearly 10,000 background checks on a rotating basis.
- 3) Creates an avoidable gap in safety measures, as CASA programs do not receive ongoing alerts from CACI, unlike other screening entities.

"AB 741 proposes a simple but impactful solution: amending the California Penal Code to allow CASA programs to receive subsequent notices from CACI. This change aligns with existing practices for background check notifications and ensures CASA programs can act swiftly if a volunteer or staff member is implicated in a child abuse allegation."

Arguments in Opposition

None submitted.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, "No significant costs to DOJ. The bill allows DOJ to increase the fee it collects from each CASA applicant to cover its costs for making additional notifications required by the bill, and DOJ reports no significant costs."

VOTES:

ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 9-0-0

YES: Schultz, Alanis, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Lackey, Nguyen, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Sanchez, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hadwick, Hart, Pacheco, Solache, Ta

ABS, ABST OR NV: Pellerin

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0-4

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Chen, Gallagher, Harabedian, Lackey

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Jones, Reyes

UPDATED

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