

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 898 (Bryan)

As Amended September 4, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes county-based mobile response systems that are not otherwise responding to calls placed through the statewide hotline known as the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), to utilize staff based on local needs, and expands their usage to include those receiving family preservation or voluntary or court-ordered family maintenance services.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Include, as part of the data required to be collected regarding individuals served through FURS and county-based mobile response systems, data on the number of calls received by a county-based mobile response system, including calls received through the statewide hotline and portal.
- 2) Clarify that the coordinated plan describing how the county-based mobile response system will meet specified requirements before it is submitted to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), is required to be updated and submitted on a biennial basis.
- 3) Add to the elements required to be included in the coordinated plan to include the date of plan submission and a point-of-contact information for the plan, including name, telephone number, and email address.
- 4) Clarify that if a county-based mobile response system that is not otherwise responding to calls placed through FURS chooses to utilize mobile response staff based on local needs, the county-based mobile response system is required to prioritize calls placed through the statewide hotline for urgent responses, and is required to continue to maintain sufficient staffing to ensure compliance with all requirements.

COMMENTS

FURS. In 2018, the Legislature introduced legislation to establish the FURS program; however, Governor Brown vetoed the bill out of concern for the substantial financial cost of the program, stating it would be better implemented through the budget process.

As a result, the FURS program was adopted through the 2019 budget (SB 80 [Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review] Chapter 27, Statutes of 2019). It was designed to build on the Continuum of Care Reform and system-of-care developments in the foster care system to increase foster youth and caregiver access to mental health services and provide counseling and conflict resolution in moments of crisis. The statewide hotline became available for youth and caregivers on March 1, 2021. The legislation authorized CDSS to contract with the Sacramento Children's Home to operate the statewide hotline, and as of July 1, 2021, mobile response teams were fully implemented across all counties.

The passage of FURS required CDSS and the counties to establish a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level response system for current and former foster children, youth, nonminor dependents (NMDs), and their caregivers. This response system was designed to

provide a collaborative and timely state-level, 24/7 hotline for immediate response and a county-level, in-home, in-person mobile response during situations of crisis or instability. The ultimate goal is to preserve the relationship between the caregiver and the child or youth.

FURS was designed to provide children or youth currently or formerly in foster care, as well as their caregivers, with immediate, trauma-informed support via the 24/7 statewide hotline whenever issues or conflicts arise. When calling the hotline, youth or caregivers are connected to trained counselors who specialize in conflict resolution and de-escalation. These counselors help address conflicts in real time, often resolving issues without requiring further intervention.

By providing immediate support, FURS provides a trauma-informed alternative to calling 911 or law enforcement, which previously was often the only option. If additional support is needed, the hotline can connect youth or caregivers to county mobile response and stabilization teams. These teams provide in-home services focused on de-escalation, stabilization, conflict resolution, and ongoing support from a trauma-informed perspective. Both the hotline and the mobile response teams help link youth and caregivers to local services for continued assistance, if needed, ensuring access to a comprehensive network of support.

The initial crisis response and connection to ongoing support are intended to assist with long-term conflict management and resolution skills. These services aim to stabilize living situations, mitigate distress for children or youth, and promote a healthy, healing environment for children, youth, NMDs, and families. Ideally, these interventions prevent disruptive placement changes or the need for more restrictive interventions, such as law enforcement involvement, hospitalizations, or congregate care placement referrals.

Placement Stability Rates. Several factors contribute to California's placement stability rates for foster youth in California, including limited access to community-based, trauma-informed support during crises. Additionally, many caregivers call the police for assistance during times of crisis because they lack alternative immediate support options. FURS aims to remediate these challenges by offering current and former foster youth and their caregivers with immediate, trauma-informed services that work to prevent placement disruptions, reduce law enforcement involvement, and minimize placements in out-of-home facilities.

Data show that in Los Angeles County, which has the largest number of FURS support requests, 87% of in-person mobile responses have successfully stabilized placements. This pattern continues statewide, where the total number of placement changes in California has decreased by 16% since the launch of FURS. Furthermore, the percentage of youth who have been in foster care for a year and moved three or more times is now at an all-time low of 26.7%—representing a 20% decrease since FURS was implemented.

Is FURS Underutilized? According to the FURS 2023 Legislative Report, "In the third year of the FURS program, utilization of the hotline and mobile response steadily increased, as observed in month-to-month comparisons. There was a total of 4,987 calls made to the hotline in the period of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, with 1,090 of those calls resulting in an in-person mobile response." Advocates assert that requiring a call to the state hotline to dispatch county mobile response teams, along with restricting services to only current and former foster youth, has led to FURS being underutilized.

This bill aims to expand access to FURS, increase its use among families involved in the child welfare system, and further improve placement stability through the following changes:

- 1) *Streamlining Mobile Response Access*: Under current law, counties must first direct calls through the FURS state hotline before dispatching mobile response teams. *This bill* will explicitly authorize counties to deploy these teams based on local needs, eliminating the state-level call requirement.
- 2) *Expanding Eligibility*: FURS services are currently limited to current and former foster youth and their families. *This bill* will extend eligibility to families receiving family preservation services and those participating in voluntary or court-ordered family maintenance services.
- 3) *Ensure Ongoing Program Effectiveness*: *This bill* will mandate a biennial, county-wide, cross-system review of local FURS implementation to ensure that services remain continuously available to system-impacted families.

Equity Implications: The provisions of *this bill* seek to expand access to FURS by broadening the population it serves and authorizing county mobile response teams to be dispatched without first requiring a call to the state hotline.

Among youth callers whose race and or ethnicity was recorded, Black adolescents accounted for the second-highest number of calls (10.8%) after White adolescents, followed by Native American youth. Data show that Black and Native American youth are largely overrepresented in foster care – approximately four times their share of the general youth population in California. Additionally, data on California's 1999 birth cohort indicates that by 18 years of age, about one in two Black and Native American children experience some level of engagement with the child welfare system.

Economic disparities also play a critical role in child welfare involvement. California children with public insurance, such as Medi-Cal, experience child welfare intervention at more than twice the rate of those with private insurance. Given this strong correlation between income and child welfare system involvement, *this bill* seeks to expand access to FURS services to help mitigate the challenges of placement disruptions, particularly for low-income youth and youth of color who are disproportionately affected.

According to the Author

"[This bill] is a bill designed to expand access to the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), which provides timely, state-level phone-based responses and county-level in-home, in-person mobile responses during periods of instability. This bill will make county-level mobile-response teams directly accessible to community members, expand eligibility to families using family preservation services to prevent foster care entries, and promote regular reviews to keep these services updated and effective. Through these efforts, [this bill] will ensure that FURS remains readily available for families in need, ultimately supporting greater retention in caregiver placements for foster youth and at-risk non-foster youth impacted by the child welfare system."

Arguments in Support

Children Now, a co-sponsor, states, "[This bill] will help prevent entries into foster care by allowing FURS to serve more child welfare-involved children, youth, and families, clarify that counties have the flexibility to dispatch FURS teams based on local needs, and support outreach around and implementation of this valuable resource."

Arguments in Opposition

No opposition on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, the introduced version of the bill would have resulted in negligible state costs.

VOTES:**ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-0**

YES: Lee, Castillo, Calderon, Elhawary, Essayli, Jackson, Celeste Rodriguez

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

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

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0-6

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, 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: Arambula, Boerner, Carrillo, Jeff Gonzalez, Irwin, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 35-0-5

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Dahle, Grove, Ochoa Bogh, Reyes, Seyarto

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