

Date of Hearing: June 9, 2026  
Counsel: Dustin Weber

## ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Nick Schultz, Chair

SB 1143 (Caballero) – As Amended April 14, 2026

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes the members of a multidisciplinary team associated with a children's advocacy center to share any information or records, as defined, including video recordings of the forensic interview, with child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect for specified purposes.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Makes specified persons mandated reporters who shall make reports of suspected child abuse or neglect to any police department or sheriff, designated county probation departments, or a county welfare department. (Pen. Code, §§ 11165.7, 11165.9.)
- 2) Authorizes each county to use a children's advocacy center to implement a coordinated multidisciplinary response to investigate reports involving child physical or sexual abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment and sets forth standards that a children's advocacy center must meet. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4.)
- 3) Provides that the multidisciplinary team at a children's advocacy center shall include one representative from law enforcement, child protective services, the district attorney's office, a medical provider, a mental health provider, a victim advocate, and in the case of an Indian child, a representative from the child's tribe. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(1).)
- 4) Provides that the files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in providing services through a children's advocacy center are confidential and not public records. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (d).)
- 5) States that notwithstanding any other law providing for the confidentiality of information or records relating to the investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect, the members of a multidisciplinary team associated with a children's advocacy center, including agency representatives, child forensic interviewers, and other providers at the children's advocacy center, are authorized to share with other multidisciplinary team members any information or records concerning the child and family for the sole purpose of facilitating a forensic interview or case discussion or providing services to the child or family. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (e).)
- 6) Requires that the shared information or records shall be treated as confidential to the extent required by law by the receiving multidisciplinary team members. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (e).)

- 7) Establishes that, among the standards that a children's advocacy center must meet, the children's advocacy center shall verify that interviews conducted in the course of investigations are conducted in a forensically sound manner and occur in a child-focused setting designed to provide a safe, comfortable, and dedicated place for children and families. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(8).)
- 8) Requires that a children's advocacy center or other identified multidisciplinary team member custodian ensure that all recordings of child forensic interviews be released only in response to a court order; and requires the court to issue a protective order as part of the release of such recordings, unless the court finds good cause that the disclosure of the recording shall not be subject to such an order. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(A)(i)-(vi).)
- 9) States that notwithstanding the requirements for release of recordings of child forensic interviews, the children's advocacy center or other identified multidisciplinary team member custodian shall release or consent to the release or use of any recording, upon request, to any of the following:
  - a) Law enforcement agencies authorized to investigate child abuse, or agencies authorized to prosecute juvenile or criminal conduct described in the forensic interview. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(B)(i).)
  - b) County counsel evaluating an allegation of child abuse. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(B)(ii).)
- 10) Establishes the inherent privacy interest that a child has with respect to the child's recorded voice and image when describing highly sensitive details of abuse or neglect and provides that any and all recordings of child forensic interviews are not subject to a Public Records Act Request and are exempt from any such request. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(E)(i).)
- 11) States that a child forensic interview recording shall not become a public record in any legal proceeding. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(E)(ii).)
- 12) Requires a court to order the recording be sealed and preserved at the conclusion of a criminal proceeding. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(E)(iii).)
- 13) Defines "recording" as including audio, video, digital, or any other manner in which the child's voice or likeness is memorialized. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (g).)
- 14) Defines "child abuse or neglect" to include physical injury or death inflicted by other than accidental means upon a child by another person, sexual abuse, neglect, the willful harming or injuring of a child, or the endangering of the person or health of a child, and unlawful corporal punishment or injury against a child. Specifies that "child abuse or neglect" does not include a mutual affray between minors. "Child abuse or neglect" does not include an injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as a peace officer. (Pen. Code, §11165.6.)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Sponsor:** County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA).
- 2) **Author's Statement:** According to the author, “SB 1208 is an important bill in California’s fight against consumer fraud and scams. Criminal organizations, especially transnational organizations, use digital financial assets in their complex schemes to defraud Californians and to launder the proceeds from their criminal activities. Using blockchain analysis, law enforcement agencies can track the movement of digital financial assets and work with digital asset custodians to freeze funds. Existing state law, however, requires a criminal conviction to effect forfeiture of fraud proceeds, a hurdle that is nearly impossible to clear when the alleged criminal is located overseas in a jurisdiction that does not cooperate with U.S. law enforcement agencies.

“This bill helps to remedy the challenges posed by existing law in returning assets to scam victims. The bill establishes a process whereby California law enforcement agencies can issue a warrant to seize funds when they have reasonable cause and administer a fair process for the owner of the funds to show that the assets were not related to criminal activities. While more needs to be done from stopping these criminals from reaching Californians in the first place, this is a critical bill to improve the outcomes for victims of fraud and scams.”

- 3) **Effect of the Bill:** SB 1143 would authorize defined child welfare agencies to receive certain records relating to child abuse and neglect, including video recordings of the forensic interview. Existing law allows each county to use children’s advocacy centers to coordinate a multidisciplinary response to investigate reports involving child physical or sexual abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4.) The multidisciplinary team at a children’s advocacy center must include one representative from law enforcement, child protective services, the district attorney’s office, a medical provider, a mental health provider, a victim advocate, and in the case of an Indian child, a representative from the child’s tribe. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(1).)

Children’s advocacy center teams may conduct forensic interviews during their investigations. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4 (b)(8).) These interviews can be recorded for investigative and referential purposes. Because interviews are recorded, the child victim generally only needs to be interviewed once about their abuse. These recordings are generally confidential and may only be shared pursuant to a court order. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(A).) Children’s advocacy centers or its members, however, may share any information or records concerning the child and family with members of the center’s multidisciplinary team, but only for the purposes of facilitating a forensic interview, case discussion, or providing services to the child or family. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (e).) Centers or their team member custodian additionally must release or consent to the release or use of any recording, upon request, to law enforcement agencies authorized to investigate child abuse, agencies authorized to prosecute juvenile or criminal conduct described in the forensic interview, or county counsel evaluating an allegation of child abuse. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(B)(i)-(ii).)

Existing law contains some ambiguity regarding whether these recordings can be shared. The current lack of clarity is, in part, caused by uncertainty over whether “county counsel

evaluating an allegation of child abuse” covers child welfare agencies. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (b)(9)(B)(ii).) It is additionally unclear whether the recordings qualify as “information or records” that may be shared with all members of the multidisciplinary team. (Pen. Code, § 11166.4, subd. (e).)

Notably, there is no specified limitation on the uses of these recordings by enumerated agencies. Under the current scheme, children’s advocacy centers may share “any information or records” with any member of the multidisciplinary team, but only for the purpose of conducting a forensic interview, staff discussion, or providing services to the child and their family. SB 1143, however, would allow child welfare agency staff, in addition to law enforcement and county counsel, to use the interview recordings for other purposes. Such purposes may include, for example, conducting dependency investigations and making recommendations regarding visitation.

This bill appears to address the ambiguity over whether recordings of forensic interviews may be shared with child welfare agencies.

- 4) **Argument in Support:** According to the bill’s sponsor, the County Welfare Directors Association, “The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is pleased to be a CO-SPONSOR of SB 1143 by Senator Caballero. The bill makes statutory changes to Penal Code 11166.4 to allow Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) to release recordings of child forensic interviews to child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect, upon request.

“California established the framework for coordinated child abuse investigations through AB 2741 (2020), which authorized counties to utilize CACs to coordinate multidisciplinary responses to cases involving child abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment. These centers bring together professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical providers, mental health professionals, and victim advocates to ensure investigations are conducted in a trauma-informed, child-focused environment. Later, legislation, including AB 477 (2021) and SB 603 (2023), further strengthened the role of CACs and established detailed protocols governing the release and protection of forensic interview recordings.

“Under existing law, child welfare agencies are not explicitly listed among the entities authorized to receive recordings of child forensic interviews. In practice, this omission means that county social workers responsible for investigating allegations of abuse or neglect may have access only to written summaries or notes rather than the recordings themselves. For counties tasked with assessing child safety and determining appropriate interventions, this limitation can reduce investigators’ ability to fully assess a child’s statements, including tone, emotional cues, and other non-verbal indicators that are often critical to understanding the context of abuse.

“This statutory gap directly affects the effectiveness of child welfare investigations and the ability of agencies to protect children. Social workers play a central role in assessing risk, determining whether intervention is necessary, and coordinating services for affected families. Without direct access to recorded interviews, investigators lack important context that informs safety decisions or case outcomes. In some cases, this constraint can prolong investigations or require additional follow-up interviews, potentially increasing trauma for the child involved.

“SB 1143 would address this issue by explicating allowing CACs or other designated custodians to release forensic interview recordings to child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect. The bill preserves all existing confidentiality safeguards, including protective order requirements and prohibitions against public release or duplication.

“By clarifying that child welfare agencies can access these recordings, SB 1143 advances the collaborative, multidisciplinary approach California has built to respond to child abuse. This bill ensures that all appropriate investigative partners have the tools necessary to fully evaluate allegations while maintaining strong privacy protections for child victims. This change will support more informed investigations, improve coordination among agencies, and reduce the likelihood that children must repeat traumatic experiences during the investigative process.”

5) **Argument in Opposition:** No longer relevant.

6) **Related Legislation:**

- a) SB 557 (Hurtado) would define “family resource center” to mean a family-friendly entity serving as a hub for multigenerational, family-centered, and family-strengthening support services that, among other things, are provided at no cost or low cost to participants, and are reflective of, and responsive to, community needs and interests, with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect and strengthening children and families. SB 557 has been referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee.
- b) AB 1566 (Jackson) would update the definition of severe neglect for purposes of the Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act (CANRA). AB 1566 was ordered to the inactive file on the Assembly Floor.
- c) AB 1688 (Carrillo) would require notice of a mandated report to be sent to an attorney representing the child in a dependency proceeding and prohibit the notice from disclosing the substance of the report. AB 1688 has been referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee.

7) **Prior Legislation:**

- a) SB 603 (Rubio), Chapter 717, Statutes of 2023, required a children’s advocacy center or other identified multidisciplinary team member custodian to ensure that all recordings of child forensic interviews be released only in response to a court order.
- b) AB 477 (Rubio), Chapter 93, Statutes of 2021, clarified that, if a county uses a child advocacy center to implement that multidisciplinary response, the team may include the child advocacy center.
- c) AB 2741 (Garcia), Chapter 353, Statutes of 2020, authorized counties to implement a multidisciplinary response to investigate reports involving child physical or sexual abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment, using a children’s advocacy center; and authorized

members of a multidisciplinary team to share with each other information concerning the child, the family of the child, and the person who is the subject of the investigation, as specified.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)  
Legislative Action Committee - Santa Clara County School Boards Association

**Opposition**

None submitted.

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