
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: SB 1190 **Hearing Date:** April 21, 2026
Author: Grove
Version: April 13, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: SJ

Subject: *Safe Passage for Youth Act*

HISTORY

Source: 11:11 Media

Prior Legislation: AB 878 (Gipson), Ch. 660, Stats. of 2017
AB 1997 (Stone), Ch. 612, Stats. of 2016
AB 403 (Stone), Ch. 773, Stats. of 2015
SB 1013 (Com. on Budget and Fiscal Rev.), Ch. 35, Stats. of 2012

Support: California Public Defenders Association; Courage California; Educate. Advocate.; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Lives in the Balance; Orange County United Way; Unsilenced; (if amended) Disability Rights California; Youth Law Center; 7 individuals

Opposition: None known

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Social Services (CDSS) to license and regulate youth transportation companies operating in the state; require CDSS to establish application requirements and criteria for licensure as well as conduct criminal background checks of applicants, and certain other individuals, as specified; prohibit a youth transportation company from operating in the state without a license; and impose various requirements and restrictions on licensed youth transportation companies.

Existing law establishes the State Department of Social Services (CDSS). (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 10550.)

Existing law requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide to CDSS, pursuant to state or federal law authorizing the department to receive state or federal summary criminal history information, and authorizes DOJ to provide to any other entity authorized by state or federal law to receive state or federal summary criminal history information, subsequent state or federal arrest or disposition notification to assist in fulfilling employment, licensing, or certification duties, or the duties of approving relative caregivers, nonrelative extended family members, and resource families upon the arrest or disposition of any person whose fingerprints are maintained on file at the DOJ or FBI as the result of an application for licensing, employment, certification, or approval. Authorizes DOJ to submit fingerprints to the FBI where the fingerprints will be retained for the purpose of being searched by future submissions to the FBI, including latent

fingerprint searches. Authorizes DOJ to search latent print images against all retained fingerprint submissions. (Pen. Code, § 11105.2, subd. (a).)

Existing law authorizes a human resource agency or an employer to request from DOJ records of all convictions or any arrest pending adjudication involving the specified offenses of a person who applies for a license, employment, or volunteer position, in which they would have supervisory or disciplinary power over a minor or any person under their care. Requires DOJ to furnish the information to the requesting employer and also send a copy of the information to the applicant. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (a).)

Existing law requires a request for records to include the applicant's fingerprints, which may be taken by the requester, and any other data specified by DOJ. Requires DOJ to forward requests received for federal criminal offender record information to the FBI to be searched for any record of arrests or convictions. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (b).)

Existing law requires the agency or employer to notify the parents or guardians of any minor who will be supervised or disciplined by the employee or volunteer when a criminal convictions request reveals that a prospective employee or volunteer has been convicted of a violation or attempted violation of any sex offense requiring sex offender registration, except as specified; assault with intent to commit specified crimes, including sex offenses; statutory rape; child abuse and endangerment; inflicting cruel or inhuman corporal punishment on a child resulting in an injury; or willfully inflicts corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition upon a victim, and where the agency or employer hires the prospective employee or volunteer. (Pen. Code, § 11105.3, subd. (c).)

Existing law requires DOJ to secure any criminal record of a person to determine whether the person has ever been convicted of nonconsensual touching of another, a sex offense against a minor, or of any felony that requires sex offender registration, or whether the person has been convicted or incarcerated within the last 10 years for child abuse and endangerment, inflicting cruel or inhuman corporal punishment on a child resulting in an injury, elder or dependent adult abuse, or theft, robbery, burglary, or any felony. Requires DOJ to provide a subsequent arrest notification, if both of the following conditions are met:

- An employer of the person requests the determination and submits fingerprints of the person to the DOJ. Provides that "employer" includes, but is not limited to, an in-home supportive services recipient; an aged or disabled adult who is ineligible for benefits, who receives care, as specified; any recipient of personal care services under the Medi-Cal program; and any public authority or nonprofit consortium, as described.
- The person is unlicensed and provides nonmedical domestic or personal care to an aged or disabled adult in the adult's own home.
(Welf. & Inst. Code, § 15660, subd. (a).)

Existing law requires DOJ to notify the employer if it is found that the person has ever been convicted of the above specified offenses. Requires DOJ to notify the employer if no criminal record information has been recorded. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 15660, subd. (b).)

Existing law requires an individual to obtain either a criminal record clearance or a criminal record exemption from CDSS before the person's initial presence in a child day care facility, as specified. (Health & Saf. Code, §§ 1596.871 et seq.)

Existing law defines “short-term residential therapeutic program” (STRTP) to mean a residential facility operated by a public agency or private organization and licensed by CDSS that provides an integrated program of specialized and intensive care and supervision, services and supports, treatment, and short-term, 24-hour care and supervision to children that is trauma-informed, as defined in standards and regulations adopted by the department. Requires that the care and supervision provided by an STRTP is nonmedical, except as otherwise permitted by law. (Health & Saf. Code, § 1502, subd. (a)(18).)

Existing law defines “private alternative boarding school” to mean a group home licensed by CDSS to operate a program to provide youth with 24-hour residential care and supervision, that, in addition to providing educational services to youth, provides, or holds itself out as providing, behavioral-based services to youth with social, emotional, or behavioral issues. Requires that the care and supervision provided by a private alternative boarding school is nonmedical, except as otherwise permitted by law. (Health & Saf. Code, § 1502, subd. (a)(19).)

Existing law defines “private alternative outdoor program” to mean a group home licensed by CDSS to operate a program to provide youth with 24-hour residential care and supervision, that provides, or holds itself out as providing, behavioral-based services in an outdoor living setting to youth with social, emotional, or behavioral issues. Requires that the care and supervision provided by a private alternative outdoor program is nonmedical, except as otherwise permitted by law. (Health & Saf. Code, § 1502, subd. (a)(20).)

Existing law establishes the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) which is generally intended to protect children from abuse and neglect with a focus on the needs of the victim. (Pen. Code, § 11164.)

Existing law requires any mandated reporter who has knowledge of or observes a child, their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment whom they know or reasonably suspect has been the victim of child abuse or neglect, to report it as specified, to any police or sheriff's department, a county probation department if designated by the county to receive mandated reports, or the county welfare department. (Pen. Code, §§ 11166, subd. (a), 11165.9.)

This bill provides that its provisions are intended to establish standards governing private youth transportation companies that transport minors to residential treatment programs or similar facilities in order to ensure safety, transparency, and appropriate oversight.

This bill includes the following definitions:

- “Department” means the State Department of Social Services.
- “Minor” means an individual younger than 18 years of age.
- “Youth transportation company” means a business entity that transports a minor to a residential treatment program, therapeutic boarding school, wilderness program, behavioral modification program, or other residential youth placement.

This bill requires CDSS to license and regulation youth transportation companies operating in California.

This bill requires CDSS to do both of the following in licensing and regulating youth transportation companies:

- Establish application requirements and criteria for licensure necessary to ensure that youth transportation companies satisfy minimum safety and operational standards.
- Conduct criminal background checks of applicants and other individuals, as specified.

This bill authorizes CDSS to all of the following in licensing and regulating youth transportation companies:

- Establish operational standards.
- Investigate complaints and potential violations of operational standards.
- Issue administrative citations and impose administrative penalties and civil fines.
- Refer cases to the Attorney General for a civil enforcement action.

This bill authorizes CDSS to establish a reasonable licensing fee that is no more than the amount necessary to cover the cost of administering and enforcing the provisions of this bill.

This bill prohibits youth transportation company from operating in California without a license.

This bill exempts the following from the licensure requirement:

- County child welfare agencies and their employees, including, but not limited to, child protective services workers.
- Licensed child daycare facilities transporting children in their care.
- Nonemergency medical transportation providers otherwise operating in compliance with state law.
- Emergency ambulance providers.
- Law enforcement and juvenile justice entities transporting individuals in their custody.
- Parents, legal guardians, or family members transporting a minor.

This bill authorizes CDSS to review, suspend, or revoke a license under any of the following circumstances:

- The licensee is the subject of a criminal investigation related to the transportation of minors.
- Law enforcement reports indicate conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of minors.
- CDSS receives credible complaints regarding abuse, neglect, or unlawful conduct during the transportation of minors.
- The licensee fails to comply with program requirements established by the department.

This bill authorizes CDSS to coordinate with law enforcement agencies and other state or local authorities when investigating potential violations of law or operational standards.

This bill requires a licensed youth transportation company pursuant to do all of the following:

- Enroll all drivers in the pull-notice system in order to monitor driver records.

- Ensure that all individuals involved in transporting minors completes training that addresses, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - First aid and CPR training and certification.
 - Duties imposed under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act.
 - Behavioral deescalation techniques.
 - Safe transportation practices.
- Prior to transporting a minor, obtain written consent from the parent or legal guardian of the child and maintain documentation that written consent was obtained.
- Document incidents occurring during transportation including, but not limited to, injuries, medical emergencies, use of physical restraints, and significant behavioral incidents, and maintain incident reports.
- Maintain written policies governing the safety and welfare of minors during transport, as specified.

This bill prohibits a licensed youth transportation company from doing either of the following:

- Use any of the following during transport:
 - Blindfolds.
 - Hoods.
 - A device to obstruct a minor's vision.
 - Mechanical restraints, including, but not limited to, handcuffs, chains, irons, and straight jackets, or physical restraints, unless necessary to prevent imminent, serious physical harm and less restrictive alternatives are not available. Prohibits restraints from being used pursuant to this subparagraph as a punishment, for staff convenience, or as a substitute for supervision of minors.
- Pick up a minor for transport between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

This bill authorizes the Attorney General to bring an action in superior court to enforce the provisions of this bill if a youth transportation company fails to obtain licensure or engages in repeated or egregious violations of the provisions of this bill.

COMMENTS

1. Need For This Bill

According to the author:

SB 1190 addresses a gap in California law by establishing oversight for private companies that transport minors to residential treatment and behavioral programs. These companies often serve vulnerable youth but currently operate with little to no statewide regulation, leading to reports of traumatic and, in some cases, cruel practices during transport. SB 1190 creates a commonsense framework requiring licensing, background checks, training, and clear safety standards. This bill ensures that when a child is being transported to receive care, that process is safe, accountable, and not a source of further harm.

2. Private Transportation Companies Transporting Youth

The continuum of care within the state’s child welfare system provides a variety of placement options for youth who cannot safely remain in their homes. Those placements include STRTPs, foster family agencies, transitional shelter care facilities, transitional housing placement providers, group homes, community crisis homes, private alternative boarding school, and private alternative outdoor program, among others.

Private companies that transport youth to and from residential placements for youth have increasingly come under scrutiny for their treatment of the youth who they are transporting. (See Chris Hagel, *Santa Cruz County wants the state to regulate youth transport companies after viral video raised concerns* (Jan. 31, 2023) <<https://www.ksbw.com/article/santa-cruz-county-wants-the-state-to-regulate-youth-transport-companies-after-viral-video-raised-concerns/42725465>>.) One particularly troubling practice referred to as “gooning” occurs when “[b]rawny men show up under the cover of darkness and force a teenager into a vehicle, taking them against their will to a boarding school, foster home or treatment center.” (Associated Press, *Calls for regulation hope to get a handle on troubled teen transporters* (Sept. 27, 2022) <<https://www.kuer.org/race-religion-social-justice/2022-09-27/calls-for-regulation-hope-to-get-a-handle-on-troubled-teen-transporters>>.) Youth are often restrained with zip ties or handcuffs, and blindfolded or hooded. (*Ibid.*)

This bill requires CDSS to license and regulate youth transportation companies operating in the state, prohibits a youth transportation company from operating in the state without a license, and imposes various requirements and restrictions on licensed youth transportation companies. Specifically, this bill prohibits the use of blindfolds, hood, or physical restraints, unless necessary to prevent imminent, serious physical harm and only if less restrictive alternatives are not available. This bill also prohibits picking up a minor for transport between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

3. Background Checks

Existing law requires DOJ to provide state or federal summary criminal history information to CDSS pursuant to state or federal law authorizing the department to receive that information. (Pen. Code, § 11105.2, subd. (a).) Existing law also requires a variety of individuals operating in the health and human services fields to undergo a fingerprint criminal background check. For example, as a condition of issuing licenses, permits, or certificates of approval for persons to operate or provide direct care services in a childcare center or family childcare home, applicants must submit to a fingerprint background check to obtain a criminal record clearance. (Health & Saf. Code, § 1596.871.)

This bill requires CDSS to license and regulate youth transportation companies operating in the state. As part of the licensing and regulation, the bill requires CDSS to conduct criminal background checks of applicants and other individuals, consistent with the requirements of Health and Safety Code section 1593.871. Section 1593.871 requires CDSS, before (and if applicable, subsequent to) issuing a license or special permit to any person to operate or manage a day care facility, to secure from an appropriate law enforcement agency a criminal record to determine whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime other than an infraction or arrested for any registerable sex offense, assault with a deadly weapon, assault of a child under eight years of age resulting in the death of the child, willfully inflicting corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition upon a victim, or child endangerment. This requirement also applies to

adults responsible for administration or direct supervision of staff; any person, other than a child, residing in the facility; any person who provides care and supervision to the children; and any staff person, volunteer, or employee who has contact with the children, among others. (*Ibid.*)

4. Argument in Support

The California Public Defenders Association writes:

SB 1190 addresses a gap in California law by establishing oversight for private companies that transport minors to residential treatment and behavioral programs. These companies often serve vulnerable youth but currently operate with little to no statewide regulation, leading to reports of traumatic and, in some cases, cruel practices during transport. SB 1190 creates a commonsense framework requiring licensing, background checks, training, and clear safety standards. This bill ensures that when a child is being transported to receive care, that process is safe, accountable, and not a source of further harm. transporting children at night, the use of unnecessary restraints, and isolation without clear safety standards, training requirements, or reporting mechanisms.

SB 1190 addresses these gaps by requiring the California Department of Social Services to license and oversee youth transportation companies, set safety and operational standards, conduct background checks, and ensure training for drivers and staff in first aid, child abuse reporting, and behavioral de-escalation. The bill also requires parental consent, incident reporting, and written safety policies, while prohibiting unsafe practices such as blindfolding, the use of unnecessary restraints, and late-night pickups.

SB 1190 ensures that vulnerable minors are transported safely, transparently, and with accountability.

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