

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE

Tasha Boerner, Chair

SB 1190 (Grove) – As Amended June 23, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 33-0

SUBJECT: Child welfare: transport escort services

SUMMARY: This bill establishes the Safe Passage for Youth Act, which in part imposes revisions and additional provisions on transport escort services. Additionally, this bill prohibits a transport escort service from operating in the state without a charter-party carrier of passengers permit issued by the CPUC. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Revises the definition of “transport escort service” to mean a person, partnership, or corporation, or private entity that engages in, advertises for, or holds itself out as providing, the transportation of minor passengers for compensation, where the prearranged transit includes or results in an oversight stay away from the minor’s primary residence.
- 2) Requires a transport escort service to first provide the minor’s parents, custodial parent, or legal guardian with specified information, as provided.
- 3) Prohibits a transport escort service from transporting or accompanying a minor, except as provided.
- 4) Exempts specified scenario from the applicability of this bill, as provided, including transport by governmental agencies, under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, by family members or relatives, and childcare.
- 5) Requires a transport escort service to take various actions, including enrolling drivers in the pull-notice system established by the Department of Motor Vehicles, ensure training of individuals involved in transporting minors, and documenting specified incidents.
- 6) Prohibits a transport escort service from taking specified actions including using blindfolds, hoods, or devices to obstruct a minor’s vision. Additionally, this bill prohibits the use of restrains, except as provided, and pickup of a minor between the hours of 9:00PM and 6:00AM.
- 7) Authorizes the Attorney General to bring an action in Superior Court to enforce the provisions of the bill and seek civil penalties.
- 8) Prohibits a transport escort service from operating in the state without a charter-party carrier of passenger permits issued by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).
- 9) Specifies that a private investigator license or registration does not constitute or confer authority to operate as a transport escort service.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) States the intent of the Legislature to protect the well-being of California children by regulating private individuals and companies that transport or accompany minors to out of state residential facilities or institutions. (Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 1596.653)
- 2) Defines a transport escort service to mean any person, partnership, association, or corporation that accepts financial compensation or other consideration to accompany or transport minors who are residents of California to any residential facility or institution located outside the state. (HSC § 1596.653)
- 3) Requires a transport escort service that accompanies or transport a minor who is a resident of California to first take specified action, and prohibits a transport escort service from engaging in the act as provided. (HSC § 1596.653)
- 4) Establishes the “Passenger Charter-Party Carriers’ Act” (Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 5351 et. seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill has been substantially amended since its most recent fiscal analysis, but it is keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel and will proceed to the Appropriations Committee should it pass this committee.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Double referral and committee jurisdiction.* This bill was first heard in the Assembly Committee on Human Services. Accordingly, this analysis will primarily focus on matters pertaining to the jurisdiction of the Communications & Conveyance Committee, including the Passenger Charter-Party Carriers’ Act and associated considerations.
- 2) *Author’s statement.* “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.”
- 3) *What’s the problem?* This bill purports to address gaps in the law that results in lax oversight of private companies that transport minors to residential treatment and behavioral programs, known as the so-called “troubled teen industry”. The industry includes a range of youth residential programs designed to address emotional, behavioral, or substance abuse issues. These programs include such things as boot camps, secured group homes, therapeutic boarding schools, conversion therapy, and wilderness therapy. These programs are estimated to have between 120,000–200,000 youth residing in them¹ and many are located in Utah. In 2021, California prohibited sending youth, including foster children, to out-of-state for-profit

¹ <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/resources/newsletters/childrens-rights/five-facts-about-troubled-teen-industry/>

treatment centers after reports of rampant abuse.² However, families who private pay are still able to send their children to these out-of-state facilities, which are a billion-dollar industry.

This bill focuses on how youth are transported to these facilities, which often uses the tactic of “gooning” where men show up under cover of darkness, forcing youth into a vehicle, and taking them to facilities against their will.³ Parents often hire transport services to stage kidnappings of their children, violently extracting them from their homes, often in the middle of the night, to take them to facilities. Two states have passed laws regulating this practice, Oregon⁴ and Maryland⁵. This bill seeks to follow in the lead of these states and provide rules to ensure proper treatment of young people who are transported to residential treatment facilities.

- 4) *Does the Passenger Charter-Party Carriers’ Act apply?* This bill places requirements on transport escort services, which transport minors for compensation. With limited exemptions, the Passenger Charter-Party Carriers Act (“the Act”) already applies broadly to every person engaged in the transportation of persons by motor vehicle for compensation over any public highway in this state, including minors. Under existing law, these carriers are required to operate on a pre-arranged basis within the state, whereas out-of-state (ie; interstate) transport is not covered. Existing law specifies the permitting requirements including insurance, documentation, vehicle inspection, and enforcement. It is possible that transport escort services are already covered by the Act, at least to the extent those rides originate and end at location within the state.

On the other hand, transport escort services could arguably fall within existing specified exemptions to the Act. For example, medical transport is excluded from the Act, although this typically applies to ambulances. Transportation services incidental to operation of a youth camp are also exempt. It is conceivable that the type of transport offered by a transport escort service could fall into either category, especially the youth camp exemption, since camps usually involve some level of overnight accommodation. Nonetheless, the existing youth camp exemption includes several qualifying factors such as being registered as a non-profit under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or being an organization that operates as an organized camp, as authorized in the Health and Safety Code. For organizations and carriers that fall under that exemption, while they are not technically covered by the provisions of the Act, the exemption specifies alternative compliance requirements including registering with the CPUC and DMV, and obtaining specified levels of liability insurance.

In summary, it is possible that a transport escort service is already covered by the Act, in which case the CPUC would already have the authority to oversee and enforce requirements on these carriers. On the other hand, it is conceivable that a transport escort service might be construed as incidental to youth camps that are explicitly exempt from the Act. In either case, the Act would provide some level of oversight into these carriers. However, in order to

² <https://imprintnews.org/special-series/far-from-home>

³ <https://apnews.com/article/charles-dickens-94038022dc9af71dd9f73158cd53e945>

⁴ <https://legiscan.com/OR/bill/SB710/2021>

⁵ <https://legiscan.com/MD/bill/HB497/2025>

ensure that transport escort services are more explicitly covered by the Act, the committee may wish to amend this bill to make the regulatory requirements explicitly clear.

- 5) *What regulatory requirements and remedies does the Charter Party Carriers Act include?* The Act gives the CPUC broad authority to regulate every charter-party carrier of passengers in the state, and do all things which are necessary and convenient in the exercise of such power and jurisdiction. Assuming that some transport escort carriers are indeed charter-party carriers, various regulatory requirements would apply. For example, existing law requires a carrier to document the name of at least passenger, keep records, be subject to vehicle inspections, and obtain minimum levels of liability insurance. Such oversight could help address the issues identified by the author. Additionally, the Act makes carriers who violate the Act guilty of a misdemeanor, subject to fines, and even imprisonment in county jail. Additionally, the Act authorizes peace officers to arrest a person for operation as a charter-party carrier without authorization or a permit. Lastly, and importantly, the Act authorizes the Attorney General, a district attorney, or a city attorney to prosecute violations of the Act.

However, as was previously stated, it is possible that a transport escort service could argue that they fall under an existing exemption. To the extent that they would fall under the youth camp exemption, the committee may wish to amend this bill to bolster the incentives for carriers that fail to comply with the alternative compliance requirements.

6) *Similar/related legislation.*

- a. SB 523 (Lara), Chapter 612, Statutes of 2016, created two new licensed facility categories within the California Community Care Facilities Act: “private alternative boarding schools,” defined as licensed group homes providing residential care in combination with academic instruction and therapeutic services, and “private alternative outdoor programs,” defined as licensed programs providing behavioral-based services in an outdoor living setting. Both categories are required to be nonprofit, may admit youth only with voluntary parental consent, and are prohibited from using restraints.
- b. AB 705 (Aroner), Chapter 354, Statutes of 2000, established licensing and bonding requirements for transport escort services. Required that all transport personnel register with the TrustLine registry maintained at CDSS.

7) *Committee amendments.* The committee may wish to consider adopting the following amendments:

- a. Revise the sections relating to the Business and Professions Code, to conform with the proper sections in the Public Utilities Code.
- b. Strike the addition of Section 5380 of the Public Utilities Code.
- c. Revise Section 5353 of the Public Utilities Code, to clarify regulatory requirements for a transport escort service under the Public Utilities Code.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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