

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1190 (Grove) – As Amended July 2, 2026

|                   |                               |       |       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Policy Committee: | Human Services                | Vote: | 7 - 0 |
|                   | Communications and Conveyance |       | 9 - 0 |

Urgency: No      State Mandated Local Program: Yes      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill revises and expands existing law governing “transport escort services,” which transport minor passengers for compensation to out-of-state residential facilities or institutions.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Revises the definition of “transport escort service” to also include a private entity, in addition to a person, partnership, association, or corporation, that engages in, advertises for, or holds itself out as providing transportation of minor passengers for compensation, where the prearranged transit includes or results in an oversight stay away from the minor’s primary residence, rather than transport to only a residential facility or institution located outside the state.
- 2) Prohibits a transport escort service from transporting or accompanying a minor, unless every person employed or contracted by the transport escort service to accompany or transport the minor is trustline-registered (background checked), rather than only the persons transporting or accompanying the minor.
- 3) Exempts from the bill’s provisions the transport of minors by an individual providing private childcare, casual babysitting, or domestic nanny services, as specified, in addition to existing law exemptions for transport by government agencies or family members or the transport of minors under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.
- 4) Requires a transport escort service to take various administrative actions, including (a) enrolling drivers in the pull-notice system established by the Department of Motor Vehicles, (b) ensuring training of individuals involved in transporting minors, (c) obtaining written consent and supporting documentation from the parent or legal guardian of the child, (d) documenting incidents during transport and providing a copy of the incident report within 24-hours to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and each parent of guardian of the involved child, and (e) maintaining written policies governing the safety and welfare of minors during transport.
- 5) Requires a transport escort service that does not operate as a charter-party carrier of passengers to comply with certain requirements applicable to transportation services incidental to the operation of a youth camp and authorizes the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to enforce a violation of this provision.

- 6) Prohibits a transport escort service from using blindfolds, hoods, or a device to obstruct a minor's vision during transport, and additionally prohibits the use of behavioral restraints, except to prevent serious physical harm, and the pickup of a minor between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- 7) Authorizes the Attorney General (AG) to bring an action in superior court to enforce the provisions of the bill and seek civil penalties and other court remedies, including an order prohibiting the company from operating within the state, and specifies the AG is entitled to recover attorney's fees and costs incurred in remedying each violation.
- 8) Specifies that a private investigator license or registration does not constitute or confer authority to operate as a transport escort service or as a charter-party carrier of passengers.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) The CPUC estimates total costs of \$1.8 million (PUC Transportation Reimbursement Account) including \$403,000 in ongoing costs for two additional analysts and \$1.4 million in one-time contracting and IT system modification costs. The CPUC would be responsible for issuing a charter-party carrier permit with a new transport escort service designation and identifying companies it already regulates that would now become subject to this new designation. The CPUC would also be required to conduct a rulemaking to define the application process, permit designation, documentation standards, and enforcement and compliance framework left unspecified in the bill.
- 2) CDSS estimates ongoing General Fund costs of approximately \$80 million annually for additional staff to administer the anticipated significant influx of trustline registry applications due to the broad scope of transit providers, including Transportation Network Companies, included in the bill, and to receive incident reports from transit escort services and make determinations regarding referrals to the AG for civil enforcement, based on criteria unspecified in the bill.
- 3) Cost pressures (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund) of an unknown, potentially significant amount to the courts to adjudicate any additional filings by the AG for violations of the bill's provisions. Actual costs will depend on the number of cases filed and the amount of court time needed to resolve each case. It generally costs approximately \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on the Trial Court Trust Fund may create a demand for increased funding for courts from the General Fund. The state budget provides annual General Fund backfills to the Trial Court Trust Fund to offset revenue reductions. This backfill was \$117.3 million in 2025-26.
- 4) The Department of Justice indicates minor costs for enforcement activities.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

[This bill] 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 practice during transport. [This bill] 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) **Background.** Transport escort services are private companies that transport minors for compensation to out-of-state residential treatment and behavioral programs, such as boot camps, therapeutic boarding schools, conversion therapy, wilderness therapy, and faith-based treatment centers that proclaim to address a broad range of unwanted behaviors, from substance use and depression to defiance, sexual identity, and poor academic performance. In 2021, California prohibited sending youth, including foster children, to out-of-state for-profit treatment centers after reports of rampant abuse. However, families who “private pay” may send their children to these out-of-state facilities.

When transportation to a program is an issue, including when a child resists, parents and facilities may hire a private transport escort service to transport a child to their destination. In some cases, these companies are run by licensed private investigators who fall outside the CPUC’s passenger charter-party carrier requirements that normally apply to for-hire passenger carriers.

Existing law prohibits a transport escort service from accompanying or transporting a minor to any residential facility or institution located outside the state, unless the person or persons transporting or accompanying the minor are trustline-registered. Trustline is a criminal background check system administered by CDSS for in-home childcare providers which may also be used for other service providers needing background checks. Existing law also requires every transport escort service that accompanies or transports a minor who is a resident of California to a facility located outside the state to first provide the minor’s parents or legal guardian with specified information, including, among other things, a description of the trustline registry. Existing law makes a violation of these provisions a misdemeanor and allows an aggrieved party to bring a civil action for injunctive relief or damages, or both.

The Passenger Charter-party Carriers’ Act places charter-party carriers of passengers, defined as every person engaged in the transportation of persons by motor vehicle for compensation over any public highway, under the jurisdiction and control of the CPUC. The act prohibits a charter-party carrier of passengers from engaging in transportation services without a permit from the CPUC and requires each application for a permit to be accompanied by a specified filing fee. A violation of the act or a permit issued pursuant to the act is a crime.

Existing law, the Private Investigator Act, administered and enforced by the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services within the Department of Consumer Affairs, provides for the license and regulation of private investigators (PIs) and authorizes licensed PIs to conduct investigations, locate persons, and gather information. Transport of minors by a PI is not regulated by the CPUC.

Amid documented instances of abusive tactics by some transport escort companies, including the use of physical restraints, child advocates assert transport escort companies, which operate with little to no oversight, create serious risks to the safety and well-being of vulnerable youth.

This bill expands the definition of a transport escort service to apply to all prearranged, compensated transit of a minor involving an overnight stay away from home, without regard to destination, prohibits the use of restraints, and prohibits a private investigator from operating as a transport escort service without obtaining a permit issued pursuant to the Passenger Charter-party Carriers' Act.

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