

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1190 (Grove)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Revises California's regulation of transport escort services. Establishes conditions of operation and prohibits specified restraint practices and nighttime pickups.

Major Provisions

- 1) Expands the legislative intent to protect the well-being of California children by regulating private individuals and companies that transport or accompany minors, to apply to all minors regardless of where they are being transported.
- 2) Revises the definition of a "transport escort service" to apply to the transportation of minors to a residential facility, institution, or "youth residential program" located in this state, instead of applying to the transport of minors who are residents of California to any residential facility or institution located out of the state.
- 3) Includes a "youth residential program" in the requirement for every transport escort service that accompanies or transports a minor who is a resident of California to a residential facility, or institution located outside the state to first provide the minor's parents, custodial parent, or legal guardian (parent) with specified information. Requires the transport escort service to verify in writing that the minor's parent has received this information.
- 4) Strikes the requirement for an explanation of the minor's right to make a complaint to a child protective agency concerning abusive treatment by the transport escort service to be provided to the minor's parent.
- 5) Prohibits a transport escort service from accompanying or transporting a minor unless every person employed or contracted by the transport escort service to accompany or transport the minor is a TrustLine-registered childcare provider.
- 6) Specifies that violations of these provisions may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less \$500 or more than \$5,000 as to each person with respect to whom a violation occurs, or imprisonment in a county jail for not more than six months do not apply to the following:
 - a) Transportation network companies;
 - b) The transport of minors in their care by a community care facility, as defined; or,
 - c) The transport of minors by an individual providing private childcare, casual babysitting, or domestic nanny services, if specified criteria are satisfied:
- 7) Requires a transport escort service to do all of the following:
 - a) Possess authorization to operate as a charter-party carrier of passengers, as defined.

- b) Ensure that all individuals involved in transporting minors complete training that addresses specified elements.
 - c) Obtain written consent from the parent of the child prior to transporting a minor, and maintain documentation that written consent was obtained, including a signed acknowledgment that all provider safety, supervision, and program protections apply exclusively within the state of California. Requires the documentation to include authorization for transportation, identification of the destination, and contact information for the transport escort service.
 - d) Maintain written policies governing the safety and welfare of minors during transport. Requires the policies to address, at a minimum, access to food and water, access to restroom facilities, lodging when overnight transport occurs, and procedures for delays or itinerary changes.
- 8) Prohibits a transport escort service, from doing either of the following:
- a) Use any of the following during transport: blindfolds, hoods, a device to obstruct a minor's vision, and except as described, behavioral restraints, as defined. Behavioral restraints may be used while transporting a minor if it is necessary to prevent imminent, serious physical harm and less restrictive alternatives are not available. Restraints shall not be used as a punishment, for staff convenience, or as a substitute for supervision of minors, and shall comply with the established human rights and safety criteria
 - b) Pick up a minor for transport between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- 9) Specifies that a private investigator license or registration does not constitute or confer a permit to operate as a transport escort service. Provides that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to require a transport escort service, as defined, to hold a private investigator license or registration solely by reason of transporting or accompanying a minor.
- 10) Requires a transport escort service that performs investigative functions subject to licensure to obtain a private investigator license or registration as required for those functions.
- 11) Authorizes the Attorney General (AG) to bring an action in superior court to enforce these provisions if a transport escort service engages in repeated or egregious violations of the conduct standards.
- 12) Requires transportation services incidental to operation of a youth camp that are provided by either a nonprofit organization or an organization that operates an organized camp, as defined, serving youth 18 years of age or younger to register as a private carrier with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

COMMENTS

The Troubled Teen Industry (TTI). Each year, tens of thousands of adolescents in the United States are sent to private residential facilities variously called wilderness programs, therapeutic boarding schools, behavioral modification programs, boot camps, and faith-based treatment centers that promise to address a broad range of unwanted behaviors, from substance use and depression to defiance, sexual identity, and poor academic performance. These facilities exist in

a largely unregulated space that advocates and researchers refer to as the TTI. The United States (U.S.) Government Accountability Office found in 2007 that in the prior 17 years there had been thousands of allegations of abuse in these settings and warned that it could identify no single federal agency or other entity collecting comprehensive nationwide data on the industry.¹

Versions of federal legislation to create national safety standards have been introduced in Congress nine times since 2008, and none have passed the Senate.

Over the past two decades, many of these facilities have been eliminated from the state. In 2016, licensing requirements for private alternative boarding schools were enacted, imposing nonprofit status, voluntary admission, and restraint prohibition requirements that TTI-type operators were unwilling or unable to meet. The result is that facilities commonly associated with the TTI are now concentrated in states with less regulatory oversight, primarily Utah, Idaho, Montana, and other western states with land suitable for wilderness programming. California youth are still being sent to these programs and are being transported across state lines to get there.

Transport Escort Companies: How They Operate and Why They Are Unregulated. For a parent who has either decided, or has been persuaded, that their child needs immediate placement in a residential program, the logistics of getting the child can present a problem. Adolescents who are aware of where they are being sent frequently resist. Many of these facilities respond to this problem by using a transport escort company, which is a private business hired by the parent to physically retrieve the minor from the home, often without prior notice to the child, and transport them to the destination facility. These companies charge fees ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per transport, are contracted directly with parents, and describe their services as an extension of parental authority.

Parents who hire these companies frequently believe the escorts are employees or agents of the destination facility. In reality, transport escort companies are independent businesses operating under contracts with parents that temporarily transfer specified parental decision-making authority, including authority to physically restrain the minor and authorize medical attention, to the transport company. Once transport is underway, the minor has no access to the destination facility's staff, no ability to call anyone without the escort's permission, and no independent adult to whom they can report concerning conduct.

Since 2000, state law has required that transport escort services transporting California minors to out-of-state facilities register their personnel through the TrustLine background check system administered by CDSS and obtain written parental consent prior to transport. This statute only covers out-of-state transport, and does not impose operational standards or training requirements, and does not provide any agency with enforcement authority.

The TrustLine Registry is a background check system for in-home childcare providers administered by CDSS. Established by statute in 1992 and expanded over subsequent years, TrustLine allows parents to verify that a childcare provider has been screened by both the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation through Live Scan fingerprinting. A TrustLine-registered provider has passed a criminal history check covering both California records and national criminal databases, and has been cleared of any disqualifying offenses under the childcare provider eligibility standards.

¹ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-08-146t>

When the Legislature first addressed transport escort services in 2000, it chose TrustLine as the background check provider, requiring that all individuals transporting California minors to out-of-state residential facilities be TrustLine-registered childcare providers. At the time, TrustLine was the only CDSS-administered background check registry available. West Shield Adolescent Services, Inc., cites TrustLine registration among its credentials alongside its PI license, even as its PI license is the actual legal basis on which it operates.

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."

Arguments in Support

The sponsor, 11:11 Media writes, "[This bill] is a practical and long overdue response to this problem. It creates a licensing and oversight framework for private youth transportation companies in California, including minimum safety standards, background checks, training requirements, parental consent, and complaint investigations. Just as importantly, it prohibits some of the most harmful transport practices, including blindfolds, hoods, nighttime pickups, and the use of restraints except in the narrow circumstance of imminent, serious physical harm when no less restrictive alternative is available."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 13, 2026:

- 1) One-time and ongoing costs to the CPUC (PUC Transportation Reimbursement Account) of an unknown amount, likely in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, related to issuing charter-party carrier permits to additional transport escort services.
- 2) Ongoing General Fund costs to CDSS for additional [TrustLine] registry applications are likely minor and absorbable.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 33-0-7

YES: Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Hurtado, Niello, Padilla, Stern

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-0

YES: Lee, Tangipa, Calderon, Elhawary, Jackson, Celeste Rodriguez, Sanchez

ASM COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE: 9-0-0

YES: Boerner, Hoover, Bonta, Caloza, Castillo, Krell, Lowenthal, Rogers, Blanca Rubio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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