

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1345 (Wahab) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill adds rights regarding personal belongings to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Expands the existing right to storage space for private use to also guarantee a foster child or nonminor dependent reasonable access to and use of personal belongings, clothing, and personal items.
- 2) Establishes the right to have personal belongings transported during placement changes and other moves in a manner that preserves the youth's property and dignity, and specifies this includes the use of suitcases, duffel bags, backpacks, and moving boxes rather than trash bags or other inappropriate receptacles.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$453,000 in fiscal year 2027-28. These costs include \$185,000 for one limited-term analyst position in the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson to oversee updating the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, ensuring accessibility requirements are met, providing tribal review, working with focus groups, updating web content, administering forms, and tracking translations; and \$268,000 to print and distribute updated copies of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the Youth Law Center. According to the author:

Placement instability is a significant issue for foster youth, and research shows that unplanned or poorly managed transitions can exacerbate the trauma and loss that children in foster care already experience. Across the state, reports have revealed how some foster youth are unable to access their clothing and personal belongings, often forced to wear the same clothes for extended periods, while others experience moves where their belongings are hastily packed into trash bags, with items lost, damaged, or left behind. These practices, both unacceptable and damaging, send a harmful message to foster youth that their belongings, and by extension their identity and

experiences, do not matter. Establishing a clear and enforceable right to reasonable access and dignified transportation of belongings provides foster youth with the dignity they deserve.

- 2) **Background.** The Foster Youth Bill of Rights enumerates rights for all minors and nonminors in foster care, such as the right to live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home where they are treated with respect; to be free from physical, sexual, emotional, or other abuse; and to be placed in the least restrictive setting possible. Among the 41 enumerated rights is the right to have storage space for private use and the right to be free from unreasonable searches of personal belongings.

This bill expands the rights regarding personal belongings to include maintaining reasonable access to personal belongings and having personal belongings transported in a dignified manner.

Existing law requires the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson, within CDSS, among other duties, to translate the Foster Youth Bill of Rights into an accessible format to ensure all foster youth can receive a copy. After each two-year legislative session, the office reviews amendments to foster youth law and determines whether the compiled list of rights should be updated.

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