Office of Senate Floor Analyses
(916) 651-4171

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 1345
Author: Wahab (D)
Amended: 8/13/26
Vote: 21

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 4-0, 4/20/26
AYES: Becker, Niello, Laird, Weber Pierson
NO VOTE RECORDED: Pérez

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 5/14/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

SENATE FLOOR: 33-0, 5/22/26
AYES: 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
NO VOTE RECORDED: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Hurtado, Niello, Padilla, Stern

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 8/31/26 - See last page for vote

**SUBJECT:** Foster children: rights of foster youth

**SOURCE:** Youth Law Center

**DIGEST:** This bill adds and clarifies rights within the Foster Youth Bill of Rights. First, it creates the right to have their personal belongings transported during placement changes and other moves in a matter that preserves the youth's property and dignity. This bill also clarifies that the right to have storage space for private use also includes the right to maintain reasonable access to and use of personal belongings, clothing, and personal items.

*Assembly Amendments* make technical changes.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

1) Establishes the Foster Youth Bill of Rights which enumerates 41 separate rights of minors and nonminors in foster care. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] § 16001.9)

2) Establishes a state and local system of child welfare services, including foster care, for children who have been adjudged by the court to be at risk of abuse and neglect or who have been abused or neglected, as specified. (WIC § 202)

3) Establishes a system of juvenile dependency for children for specific reasons and designates that a child who meets certain criteria is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and may be adjudged as a dependent child of the court, as specified. (WIC § 300 et seq.)

4) Requires the status of every minor or nonminor dependent in foster care to be reviewed by the court at least once every six months, as specified. (WIC § 366)

This bill:

1) Adds to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights the right to have a foster youth's personal belongings transported during placement changes and other moves in a manner that preserves the youth's property and dignity.

2) Provides that this includes the use of suitcases, duffel bags, backpacks, and moving boxes rather than trash bags or other inappropriate receptacles.

3) Clarifies that the right to have storage space for personal use includes the right to maintain reasonable access to and use of personal belongings, clothing, and personal items.

**Background**

*Author's Statement.* According to the author, "In California, more than 35,000 children live in the foster care system. When a youth enters foster care, the experience is accompanied by profound mental and emotional trauma that disrupts relationships, schooling, and a child's sense of identity. 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.

"As dependents of the state, youth in foster care rely upon California to ensure not only their safety, but their dignity. Restricting access to personal items and handling belongings in a manner associated with refuse undermines that obligation. Establishing a clear and enforceable right to reasonable access and dignified transportation of belongings provides foster youth with the dignity they deserve. SB 1345 reinforces the responsibility of county welfare agencies to prevent unnecessary trauma, promotes consistent practice across California, and emphasizes that foster youth deserve respect like any other child."

*Youth in Foster Care.* Youth in foster care face many challenges including; education disruptions due to changing foster care placements and schools, grappling with the emotional trauma and stress of past maltreatment, removal from home, and relationship instability. As youth near adulthood, additional obstacles often include unstable housing, loss of foster care financial support and limited access to mentoring or guidance. Youth who age out of foster care often struggle with housing instability, joblessness, academic difficulties, early parenthood, and substance use.

While in the system, children often have many placements. In 2025, children with at least 8 days in care averaged 3.76 moves per 1,000 days. This number varies by age, with the total number of moves generally increasing as the children age—infants under one average 2.62 moves per 1,000 days and 16–17-year-olds average 4.52 moves per 1,000 days. The stress and trauma of these moves can be exacerbated by how the youth and their possessions are moved.

Numerous states have moved to prohibit use of trash bags to move youth and require luggage be provided to youth. Additionally, numerous nonprofit organizations across the nation collect luggage and other bags to provide to foster youth. Hope in a Suitcase, located in Los Angeles, serves 3,000 foster youth every

year providing them with a suitcase filled with essentials. Mikey's Luggage works with Koinonia Family Services to help foster youth in California and Nevada by providing youth with new luggage. The founder of Mikey's Luggage, Mike Ellis, was system involved as a youth and remembers moving his own possessions in trash bags. Of his program he says, "If I could grant one wish for foster kids today, it would probably be to give them some dignity, and I think the first place we can start is through luggage." He recalls his own luggage he had while in the foster care system, saying "That's kind of my rock, you can't touch it, it's the one thing you can't take from me." My Bag My Story, a program in Tennessee that makes and donates bags to children in foster care, notes "the benefits of providing new bags to foster children extend beyond the practicality of moving belongings." Those benefits include elevating self-worth and dignity, fostering stability and a sense of belonging, supporting positive mental health and well-being and encouraging empowerment and future orientation.

**Related/Prior Legislation**

AB 1735 (Bryan, Chapter 405, Statutes of 2022) clarified in the Foster Youth Bill of Rights that youth have the right to be provided a copy of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights in their primary language. Added to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, the right of foster youth to receive a copy of the court report, case plan, and transition to independent living plan in their primary language.

AB 317 (Patterson, Chapter 293, Statutes of 2021) clarified the role of the Foster Care Ombudsperson and allowed the Ombudsperson to notify the dependency counsel of a complaint; limited investigations to those reasonably related to the complaint and to foster care; and added other lawful court orders to ways the Ombudsperson may access sealed records for the purpose of an investigation.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

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.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 8/31/26)

Youth Law Center (Source)
Alliance for Children's Rights
California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association
California State Pta
California Youth Empowerment Network
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
County Welfare Directors Association of California
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 8/31/26)
None received

Assembly Floor 79 0 0 SB 1345 Wahab Senate Third Reading By Bryan
Ayes: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas
Noes:
No Vote Recorded:

Prepared by: Heather Hopkins / HUM. S. / (916) 651-4171
11/6/26 14:22:59

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