Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
SB 1421 (McGuire) – As Amended March 26, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services Vote: 7 - 0

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

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Child and Family Service Review System to track utilization of programs for nonminor dependents (NMDs) designed to reduce poverty and support college access.

Specifically, this bill:

1) Requires the California Child and Family Service Review System to include data measures related to utilization of programs for NMDs designed to reduce poverty and increase participation in postsecondary education, including, but not limited to, the foster youth tax credit, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

2) Allows the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to consider feedback from relevant stakeholders, including, but not limited to, researchers, county representatives, advocates, and individuals with lived experience, in determining which additional relevant data to include.

3) Requires CDSS to add these performance measures to its comprehensive review of county performance conducted at least once every five years.

FISCAL EFFECT:

1) CDSS estimates General Fund (GF) costs of $185,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2027-28 and ongoing GF costs of $181,000 annually for one position related to data collection activities.

2) CDSS estimates GF county costs of $3.7 million GF in FY 2027-28 and $2.6 million GF annually thereafter related to additional data measure requirements. These costs include:

   a) Ongoing county administrative costs of $1.3 million annually to collect the required data on NMDs and incorporate the data into system's county self-assessments, system improvement plans, and comprehensive reviews.

   b) Ongoing additional contract costs of $200,000 annually to update the existing California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) contract with the University of California, Berkeley to include the required data.

c) One-time automation costs of $1.1 million in FY 2027-28 to update the Child Welfare System – California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) to include the required data fields on program usage by NMDs.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the Author:

> [This bill] builds on California's obligation to track outcomes for young people in the state's child welfare system by addressing gaps in how outcomes for NMDs are measured. Federal and state oversight mechanisms were largely designed prior to the expansion of foster care to age 21, and current review processes do not consistently capture outcomes for this population. [This bill] will require the inclusion of utilization data measures within the California Child and Family Service Review System related to NMDs' use of resources such as the Foster Youth Tax Credit and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and require [CDSS] to conduct a comprehensive review of county performance on these measures every five years.

2) **Background.** Existing law establishes the California Child and Family Service Review System, which requires CDSS to establish a system to review all county child welfare systems, and to ensure compliance with federal regulations for the receipt of federal funds. The system replaced the former oversight mechanism and created a continuous quality improvement model that requires review of all county child welfare systems, including child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, family support, and independent living. Counties are responsible for and accountable to CDSS for child welfare program performance measures. Counties must submit updates to CDSS at least annually on their progress in achieving improvements on applicable measures.

   State law establishes the Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program. The EFC Program allows eligible youth in the child welfare and probation systems ("nonminor dependents") to remain in foster care until age 21. Youth may leave extended foster care and later choose to re-enter the program up to age 21.

   This bill updates the review system to capture utilization of programs available to NMDs.

3) **Related Legislation.** SB 624 (Caballero), Chapter 230, Statutes of 2025, requires county child welfare agencies and probation departments to annually notify NMDs of the foster youth tax credit and tax filing.

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