

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 534 (Padilla) – As Amended April 23, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires a county welfare department to provide a minor or nonminor dependent (NMD), at the minor or NMD's final review hearing or prior to the court terminating jurisdiction, the last known whereabouts of the youth's parents and siblings and their last known contact information, unless the youth declines the information.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires a county welfare department, when it provides a foster youth their family and placement history at the final review hearing before the youth turns 18 years of age, and at the youth's subsequent review hearings as a nonminor dependent (NMD), to include the last known whereabouts of the youth's parents and siblings and their last known contact information, including telephone and cell phone numbers, physical address, email address, and any known social media accounts.
- 2) Requires the family information described above to be provided to an NMD as part of the case information furnished before the court ends dependency jurisdiction.
- 3) Allows the youth the option to decline this information.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) CDSS estimates ongoing General Fund administrative costs of \$350,000 annually to county welfare agencies for case workers to provide the specified information in reports for every hearing involving a foster youth 16 or 17 years of age and NMDs over 18 years of age.

Although these are state-mandated costs, they are not reimbursable, but instead must be funded by the state pursuant to Proposition 30, which requires legislation enacted after September 30, 2012, that has an overall effect of increasing the costs already borne by a local agency for programs or levels of service mandated by realignment (including child welfare services and foster care) to apply to local agencies only to the extent the state provides annual funding for the cost increase.

- 2) CDSS anticipates minor and absorbable costs for state administration.

COMMENTS:

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

Former foster youth often leave care without the information needed to reconnect with their parents, siblings, or extended family, despite the important role these relationships can play in providing stability, support, and a sense of identity. This bill ensures youth have access to known family contact information before exiting foster care, empowering them to make informed choices about maintaining or rebuilding family connections. Providing this information helps address a gap in current law and supports better long-term outcomes for youth transitioning to adulthood.

2) **Background.** When a youth leaves foster care, whether at 18 years of age or at 21 years of age as an NMD, existing law requires the county to provide a set of transition documents and information meant to give the young person the tools to function as an adult: identification, a birth certificate, a health-coverage card, a financial-aid verification letter, and a summary of the youth's family and placement history. Advocates assert, in practice, however, the history provided to the youth may not contain the practical details a young adult needs to find a parent or sibling.

According to Children's Advocacy Institute, a co-sponsor of this bill:

[This bill] simply requires foster care case workers to offer to foster children being forced to live on their own the option of being provided the last known contact information for parents and siblings and other family members in their case file. Under the bill, this is just an offer – the foster youth is free to decline. The data show this small offer of information already in the possession of case workers could make a life-long difference in the lives of our former foster youth.

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