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Assembly Bill 253

Child death investigations: review teams.

As introduced 1/19/23

Summary

AB 253 would fill significant gaps in reporting of child deaths across California by requiring each Child Death Review Team to meet their requirements of identifying and reviewing suspicious child deaths each year and to post this report on the internet website of the county. The bill will also require the Attorney General to ensure adequate funding is available for the Statewide Child Death Review Council.

Background

California is failing to track, and therefore prevent, child deaths. By law, every California County is required to report all child abuse and neglect deaths, or near-deaths, to the Department of Social Services. However there are serious concerns about the validity and reliability of that data.

Lack of clear accountability between three state agencies; state funding that ended in 2008; and a lack of state and local priority in tracking child deaths leads to outdated and scattershot child death information. There is no consistency in how counties report

information, if they even report at all. Websites claiming to host child death reporting data are extremely outdated or route to broken links. Some counties do not have dedicated child death review teams.

This Bill

AB 253:

- Requires each Child Death Review Team to annually make data available to the public and prescribes a uniform way of posting and identifying the report to enable users to easily find the information.
- Requires the Attorney General to include sufficient funding for the California State Child Death Review Council in its annual budget submission to the Governor.
- Clarifies that County Teams can collaborate in child death review efforts.

Support

Children's Advocacy Institute (Co-Sponsor)
Children Now (Co-Sponsor)

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