



# Children's Law Center of California

Excellence In Advocacy

## Sponsored Legislation 2023

### 1. [AB 20](#) **Strengthening Family Connections (ASM Gipson)**

Many children and young adults adopted through the child welfare system report that maintaining a connection to their biological family and community is critical to their well-being. This bill would strengthen family connections for adoptees when appropriate by promoting ongoing contact between siblings and allowing parental rights to be reinstated for children and nonminor dependents in foster care after an adoption has failed.

### 2. [AB 448](#) **Promoting Family Connections for Youth in Foster Care (ASM J. Carrillo)**

Research shows that children in the foster care system who are placed with relatives have greater placement and school stability, fewer emotional and behavioral problems in placement, and more connections to their biological family and social-cultural communities. This bill would strengthen existing requirements around social workers and/or probation officers' documentation of family finding efforts.

### 3. [AB 866](#) **Preventing Food Insecurity for Transition Age Youth (ASM B. Rubio)**

*Co-sponsored with Alliance of Children's Rights*

Transition age youth in foster care are among the most vulnerable populations in California. Through no fault of their own, these youth are often faced with a multitude of difficulties, including hunger and insufficient healthy food. This bill would allow CalFresh benefits to be provided at the maximum amount to non-minor dependents (NMDs) in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs) regardless of income or resources, including NMDs who are custodial parents.

### 4. [AB 867](#) **Ensuring Youth Exiting Foster Care Can Succeed (ASM Friedman)**

*Co-sponsored with Public Counsel and Youth Law Center*

With AB 12 (2010) and the extension of foster care to age 21, California made a commitment that youth exiting foster care have the tools, resources, and support they need to live independently. However, without proper enforcement mechanisms in the law, too many youth leave the system vulnerable to unemployment, food insecurity, and housing instability. This bill would require the county agency to make active efforts to ensure youth have housing stability before exiting the system and would give the court the ability to keep a case open past age 21 if the requirements to terminate jurisdiction have not been satisfactorily met.

5. [AB 876](#) Clarifying the Court’s Jurisdiction Following the Death of a Child (ASM Rivas)

*Co-sponsored with Dependency Legal Services*

Existing law is ambiguous regarding the court’s authority to maintain dependency jurisdiction after a child in foster care has passed away. As a result, there are situations where the case is closed before the court and parties – including the child’s attorney– are provided complete information regarding the circumstances of the death. Without this information, the child’s attorney cannot fulfill their statutory duties to their young clients.

6. [AB 937](#) Reuniting Families (ASM McKinnor)

*Co-sponsored with Dependency Legal Services and Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers*

State and federal law mandate that social workers provide services to reunify a family that has been separated by the child welfare system. However, under current law, even if a Court has found that the services were insufficient, a family who has been separated for 18- months is not guaranteed further reunification services.

This bill would state that if reasonable services have not been provided to a parent -- even at the 18-month date -- the court must order an additional six (6) months of reunification services. This change would resolve ambiguities in case law by specifying that family reunification timelines can be extended if reasonable services are not met (In Re Michael G, 69 Cal.App.5th 1133 (2021)).

7. [AB 1112](#) Providing Supplemental Support for Youth Experiencing Housing Instability (ASM McKinnor)

*Co-sponsored with Public Counsel*

Current law ties certain supplemental benefits for youth in foster care to a placement. Given the housing crisis, this bill would ensure that youth experiencing housing instability are still able to receive these critical benefits.

## 8. [AB 1512](#) Foster Youth Benefits (ASM Bryan)

*Co-sponsored with Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Advocacy Institute*

Disallow the practice of county agencies collecting disability and survivor benefits to pay for the cost of foster care.

This bill would:

1. Require county agency to screen and begin applying for benefits within 60 days of a child's entry into care;
2. Provide notice to child and attorney when benefits are applied for/received. Engage youth in planning for conserved funds;
3. Ensure funds are used for child's unmet current needs or conserved for their foreseeable future needs, and monitor annual accounting on use of funds;
4. Provide financial counseling or training to new representative payees on establishing proper accounts to preserve eligibility/managing/disbursing funds

## 9. [SB 824](#) Addressing Racial Disparities in Child Welfare by Removing Additional Barriers to Relative/NREFM Placement (Senator Ashby)

*Co-sponsored with Alliance for Children's Rights, A New Way of Life, California Tribal Families Coalition, County Welfare Directors Association of California, and Starting Over, Inc.*

California's placement and approval processes exclude far too many extended family members who are fit and willing to care for children. The barriers to placement, especially those related to criminal history reviews and judgments, disproportionately impact communities of color.

Building on the changes made to relative placement and approval processes by SB 354 (Skinner, 2021), this bill would:

1. Clarify the court's authority to place with non-relative extended family members (NREFMs) who have a criminal history when there are no child safety concerns;
2. Provide the child welfare agency more discretion to place with NREFMs when there are no child safety concerns;
3. Clarify that the term "relative" in the statute includes the tribal definition of a relative;
4. Ensure placements with relatives or non-relative family members are eligible for funding if the caregiver seeks to become a guardian or adopt.