



AB 20 –Strengthening Family Connections

PURPOSE

Assembly Bill 20 would allow children and young adults adopted through the child welfare system to maintain critical connections to their biological family and community. 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.

BACKGROUND

Many children and young adults adopted through the child welfare system report that maintaining a connection to their biological family and community, especially with their siblings, is critical to their well-being.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law requires the county, to convene a meeting with the child, the sibling(s) of the child, the prospective adoptive parent(s), and a facilitator for the purpose of deciding whether to voluntarily execute a postadoption sibling contact agreement when parental rights are terminated and the court orders a dependent child or ward to be placed for adoption.

Existing law also provides that a child who has not been adopted after the passage of at least three years from the date the court terminated parental rights and for whom the court has determined that adoption is no longer the permanent plan may petition the juvenile court to reinstate parental rights.

SUMMARY

Often, when parental rights are terminated in child welfare cases, the adopted child loses all familial ties, including with siblings. AB 20 looks to address the gaps and inconsistencies in implementation of current law surrounding siblings who are separated by adoption.

In some child welfare cases, the adoption fails and the child/nonminor dependent has re-established a relationship with their biological parents sometimes to the extent that they now want to or are already living with them. Under these specific circumstances, AB 20 will provide a path to reinstating the biological parents' rights.

SUPPORT

Children's Law Center of California (Sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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