

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 970 (McKinnor) – As Introduced February 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Child abuse and neglect reporting

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes the County of Los Angeles (LA County) to establish a pilot program to test and evaluate a new model for the mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect while expanding civil and criminal immunity to include mandated reporters participating in the pilot, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the pilot program to implement and evaluate a new model for mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect with one or more organizations that represent entities who employ a mandated reporter and authorizes an organization that employs a mandated reporter to elect to participate in the pilot program.
- 2) States the goal of the pilot program is to better equip mandated reporters to make more accurate, consistent, and equitable reporting decisions about child abuse or neglect through improved training and decision support. The pilot program also aims to improve mandated reporter capacity to identify community-based supportive resources for families who are in need, but do not require an intervention by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (LA DCFS) to prevent future child abuse or neglect and promote family well-being.
- 3) Requires the pilot program to include all of the following:
  - a) The development and dissemination of a comprehensive LA County mandated reporter training to participating organizations.
  - b) Permits the training to be made available to all mandated reporters in LA County and may include training on using the decision-support tool described in c) below, as well as information about child abuse or neglect consistent with statutes and appellate legal interpretations of the legal standards; the duty to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect, including civil liability and criminal penalties for failing to report; and the role of cognitive biases in reporting decisions and racial disproportionality in the child welfare system;
  - c) The development and deployment of an internet-based, or other type of decision-support tool that may be used by mandated reporters who have completed the training described in a) above, to support and guide their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
  - d) Requires the tool to meet all of the following requirements:
    - i) Be developed through a collaborative process that includes, but is not limited to, welfare personnel, mandated reporters, people with lived experience with the child welfare system, advocates, other subject matter experts, and people with expertise in the field of decision support analysis;

- ii) Be designed in compliance with all relevant state and local laws and policies;
  - iii) Recommend to mandated reporters one of the following:
    - A) A report to the child protection hotline is required;
    - B) Consultation with the child protection hotline or another entity, as provided by the decision support tool, is required;
    - C) No report to the child protection hotline is required, but a family may benefit from supportive services; or,
    - D) No action is required.
  - iv) Notify the user that a mandated reporter is not prohibited from making a report to the child protection hotline regardless of the recommended action;
  - v) Provide documentation and confirmation of its use and the recommended action to the mandated reporter; and,
  - vi) Maintain the confidentiality of the identity of the mandated reporter regardless of the recommended action.
- e) Provide mandated reporters with access to a method for identifying local supportive resources for families who are in need of assistance. Permits this method to include, but not be limited to, an online information and referral system, a call center-based information and referral system, a services navigator, a service support center, or a combination of these.
- 4) Requires completion of the comprehensive mandated reporter training to satisfy all statutory requirements for mandated reporter training, and all other relevant code sections regarding training for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect.
  - 5) Permits the comprehensive mandated reporter training to be completed asynchronously via an electronic learning format, an instructor-led format, or an in-person format.
  - 6) Provides that, during the time the pilot program is in effect, mandated reporters participating in the pilot program in LA County shall have satisfied their reporting duties as a mandated reporter under existing law, as described in 5) and 6) below, if they have completed the training, utilized the required elements of the decision support-tool, and complied with the recommended action provided by that tool or otherwise specified by law.
  - 7) Provides that a mandated reporter who has satisfied their reporting duties as described in 6) above, is not subject to civil liability or criminal penalty for failing to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) and is not subject to penalties impacting their professional licenses, credentials, certifications, or other standards qualifying work in a particular field.
  - 8) Provides that the mandated reporter's supervisor, employer, superior, or principal is not subject to civil liability or criminal penalty for the mandated reporter's utilization of the

decision support tool and compliance with the recommended action provided by that tool regarding the same incident.

- 9) Requires, if LA County implements the pilot program, the county to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot program and report its findings to the Legislature on or before October 31, 2029.
- 10) Requires the evaluation to include, but not be limited to, all of the following:
  - a) The overall effectiveness of the pilot program;
  - b) The impacts that the pilot program had on child safety, mandated reporter decision-making, and the utilization of community-based resources; and,
  - c) The implications for other counties in the state.
- 11) Permits LA County to contract with an independent entity for the purpose of designing and conducting the evaluation, as well as preparing the report.
- 12) Requires LA County to seek the input of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and stakeholders, including people with lived experience with the child welfare system and legal representatives, in the design and implementation of the evaluation, which shall be paid for by LA County.
- 13) States “mandated reporter” has the same meaning as defined in existing law in 1) below.
- 14) Makes legislative findings and declarations related to all of the following:

Mandated reporters would benefit from enhanced training and support for making this consequential decision;

  - a) Reporting decisions made by mandated reporters are often influenced by factors that are distinct from concerns regarding child abuse or neglect, such as fear of personal or organizational liability or both, bias based on race or socioeconomic status or both, and desire to connect a family in need with supportive resources;
  - b) Mandated reporters are not currently provided adequate training and tools to guide their decisions on when to report known or suspected abuse and neglect or how to connect children and families to services if a report is not necessary but the family needs direct supports and services; and,
  - c) These factors can contribute to the disparate representation of minority populations in the child welfare system, the over-reporting of families who may be experiencing stressors that do not meet the statutory requirement for a report to the child protection hotline, and an underreporting of children who may be experiencing child abuse or neglect.
- 15) Sunsets these provisions on January 1, 2030.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Enumerates the 49 employment classifications that compose the definition of a mandated reporter to include: a teacher; a public assistance worker; an employee of a childcare institution; a peace officer; a firefighter; a physician; a coroner; a commercial film and photographic print or image processor; a child visitation monitor; an animal control officer or humane society officer; a clergy member; an employee of any police department, county sheriff's department, county probation department, or county welfare department; an athletic coach, a commercial computer technician; and, a human resource employee of a business that employs minors. (Penal Code [PEN] § 11165.7(a))
- 2) Requires the identity of all persons who report to be confidential and disclosed only among agencies receiving or investigating mandated reports. (PEN § 11167(d))
- 3) Establishes CANRA and specifies that a mandated reporter who fails to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect as required, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months confinement in a county jail or by a fine of \$1,000, or by both that imprisonment and fine. Specifies that if a mandated reporter intentionally conceals the mandated reporter's failure to report an incident known by the mandated reporter to be abuse or severe neglect, the failure to report is a continuing offense until a specified agency discovers the offense. (PEN § 11164 *et seq.*)
- 4) Authorizes any mandated reporter who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that a child is suffering serious emotional damage or is at a substantial risk of suffering serious emotional damage, evidenced by states of being or behavior, including, but not limited to, severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or untoward aggressive behavior toward self or others, to make a report to an agency. (PEN § 11166.05)
- 5) Requires a mandated reporter to make a report whenever the mandated reporter, in the mandated reporter's professional capacity or within the scope of the mandated reporter's employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. Requires the mandated reporter to make an initial report by telephone immediately or as soon as is practicably possible, and to prepare and send, fax, or electronically transmit a written follow-up report within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. Authorizes the mandated reporter to include with the report any non-privileged documentary evidence the mandated reporter possesses relating to the incident. (PEN § 11166(a))
- 6) Requires, if after reasonable efforts, a mandated reporter is unable to submit an initial report by telephone, the mandated reporter to immediately or as soon as is practicably possible, by fax or electronic transmission, make a one-time automated written report on the form prescribed by the Department of Justice, and to also be available to respond to a telephone follow-up call by the agency with which the mandated reporter filed the report. (PEN § 11166(b))
- 7) Specifies that a clergy member who acquires knowledge or a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect during a penitential communication is not subject to 5) above. (PEN § 11166(d))

- 8) Requires reports of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect to include the name, business address, and telephone number of the mandated reporter; the capacity that makes the person a mandated reporter; and the information that gave rise to the knowledge or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect and the source or sources of that information. Requires, if a report is made, the following information, if known, to also be included in the report: the child's name, address, present location, and, if applicable, school, grade, and class; the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's parents or guardians; and the name, address, telephone number, and other relevant personal information about the person or persons who the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects to have abused or neglected the child. Requires the mandated reporter to make a report even if some of this information is not known or is uncertain to them. (PEN § 11167(a))
- 9) Requires reports of suspected child abuse or neglect to be made by mandated reporters to any police department or sheriff's department, not including a school district police or security department, county probation department, if designated by the county to receive mandated reports, or the county welfare department. Requires any of those agencies to accept a report of suspected child abuse or neglect whether offered by a mandated reporter or another person, or referred by another agency, even if the agency to whom the report is being made lacks subject matter or geographical jurisdiction to investigate the reported case. Prohibits agencies that are required to receive reports of suspected child abuse or neglect from refusing to accept a report of suspected child abuse or neglect from a mandated reporter or another person unless otherwise authorized, and are required to maintain a record of all reports received. (PEN §11165.9)
- 10) Requires an administrator, employee, or regular volunteer of a youth service organization to complete training in child abuse and neglect identification and training in child abuse and neglect reporting (Business and Professions Code [BPC] § 18975(a))
- 11) Authorizes, before writing liability insurance for a youth service organization in this state, an insurer to request information demonstrating compliance with child abuse and neglect training requirements from the youth service organization as a part of the insurer's loss control program. (BPC § 18975(d))
- 12) Requires acknowledgment that the director of a heritage school and all employees are mandated reporters and subject to the requirements established by CANRA, and, consistent with that act, certification that: the employer is aware that it is encouraged to provide its employees with training in the duties imposed by CANRA; employees have signed a statement provided by the employer that the employees have knowledge of CANRA and will comply with its provisions; and, employees have been notified by the employer of their reporting obligations and confidentiality rights, pursuant to 9) above. (Education Code [EDC] § 33195)
- 13) Establishes standards and procedures for the issuance and renewal of teaching and services credentials and requires applicants to acknowledge their responsibilities under CANRA, ensuring they understand their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect. (EDC § 44252)

- 14) Sets forth requirements for the California Department of Education, in consultation with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) in CDSS, to follow regarding the detection and reporting of child abuse. (EDC § 44691)
- 15) Establishes requirements related to detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect in child day care facilities. Requires CDSS to provide training including statewide guidance on the responsibilities of a mandated reporter who is a licensed day care provider or an applicant for that license, administrator, or employee of a licensed child day care facility in accordance with CANRA. Requires CDSS to provide the guidance using its free modules provided on their website. Requires the licensee of a licensed child day care facility to obtain proof from an administrator or employee of the facility that the person has completed mandated reporter training. (Health and Safety Code §1596.8662)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** This bill was keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:** This analysis only discusses policy issues germane to the jurisdiction of the Assembly Committee on Human Services

**Background:** *Child Welfare Services (CWS)*. California's CWS system plays a vital role in the state's safety net. Social workers across counties receive reports of abuse or neglect, investigate these concerns, and work to address them. Children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect fall under the jurisdiction of the county's juvenile dependency court. While the court maintains legal authority over the child, the CWS social worker is responsible for supporting the child's well-being.

The primary goal of the system is to ensure the safety and protection of children, while also striving to preserve and strengthen families through visitation and efforts at family reunification when possible. The CWS system allows for regular evaluations and reviews of the child's custody and placement, with decisions made in consultation with the child's social worker to ensure the best outcomes for the child. The state prioritizes the reunification of foster children with their biological families whenever feasible. When reunification isn't possible, the state aims to provide a permanent alternative placement, such as adoption or guardianship, with a secondary priority of placing the child with relatives or nonrelative extended family members.

Proponents of this bill report that the CWS system is harmful and unnecessarily traumatic to families which are not abusing or severely neglecting their child. As such, *this bill* is shifting when the county should be involved in the lives of families. However, it is important to note that counties are tasked with the implementation and distribution of the state's social safety-net programs. For example, most counties report a significant number of children and families involved in both the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program and the CWS system. *This bill* shifts the onus of ensuring families have the necessary services to which they are entitled, to community-based organizations (CBOs). Under *this bill*, CBOs would take ownership of helping families in need and make sure they have access to food, mental health services, and shelter. *This bill* does not name or specify which CBOs will be stepping in for county welfare departments.

*Mandated Reporting.* Current law under CANRA provides a comprehensive reporting scheme in an effort to identify victims of child maltreatment. CANRA enumerates 49 different employment classifications that define a mandated reporter to include: a teacher; a public assistance worker;

an employee of a childcare institution; a firefighter; a physician; a coroner; a commercial film and photographic print or image processor; an animal control officer or humane society officer; a clergy member; an athletic coach, a commercial computer technician; and, a human resource employee of a business that employs minors.

Despite the vast differences in each of these jobs, all mandated reporters share the same legal duty to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect that they become aware of in the course of their employment. Mandated reporters are required to make a report to a designated agency, specifically any police or sheriff's department, not including a school district police or security department, county probation department, if designated by the county to receive such reports, or county welfare department. Any of those agencies are required to accept a report of suspected child abuse or neglect whether offered by a mandated reporter or another person.

According to data from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), a collaboration between CDSS and the University of California, Berkeley, allegations for child maltreatment have hovered between 500,000 and 400,000 per year over the last decade. The most recent data from 2024 shows there was a total of 417,513 allegations of maltreatment and the most frequent allegation type reported was for general neglect with 186,129 instances being reported.

General neglect is defined as the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred, but the child is at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness. General neglect does not include a parent's economic disadvantage.

Determining reasonable suspicion of general neglect requires the reporter to exercise their judgment on whether to report based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to suspect neglect. This standard encourages reporting without requiring certainty, which as noted by many stakeholders, can lead to overreporting. One factor that contributes to overreporting is the requirement for a mandated reporter who fails to report known or suspected neglect can face criminal charges, typically classified as a misdemeanor, and can include up to six months in confinement in a county jail and/or a fine of up to \$1,000. As noted by many advocates and stakeholders, this contributes to a fear-based reaction from the mandated reporter, who will often err on the side of reporting even if they are unsure of the veracity of their claims, or may be unconsciously reacting to the results of existing structural racism and conflating poverty with neglect.

Data from CCWIP show that in 2024, of the 417,513 allegations reported, only 46,457 (11.1%) were substantiated. 108,722 were inconclusive, 100,859 were unfounded, 145,464 had an assessment only/were evaluated out, and 16,011 were categorized as not yet determined. Although almost 90% of allegations are unsubstantiated, overreporting unnecessarily exposes hundreds of thousands of families to the scrutiny of child protective services (CPS) and can be a traumatic experience for the family enduring investigation. It is unclear, when an allegation against a family for general neglect is unsubstantiated, whether families are being directed to support to alleviate the conditions that may have caused them to come to the attention of the CWS system and CPS.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), "Families who come to the attention of the child welfare system often are experiencing poverty and other significant challenges, such as

substance use disorder or domestic violence, which can cause trauma to the children and family. Given the shorter- and longer-term negative impacts of experiencing trauma and maltreatment, child welfare system intervention may be necessary to help keep children safe from these potentially harmful situations. At the same time, involvement with the child welfare system also may result in trauma, particularly when a child is removed from their parent(s) or caregiver(s). How best to ensure child safety in a way that minimizes and mitigates trauma and ideally keeps the child with their parent(s)/caregiver(s) is a core challenge inherent to the child welfare system.”

The LAO also notes that California’s child welfare system-involved families are disproportionately Black, Native American, and come from families with low income, a demographic trend that has persisted for many years. The LAO states, “How to differentiate between families in need of supports to address risk factors, as opposed to families who require child welfare system-level intervention, is an inherent challenge for decision makers across the child welfare system.”

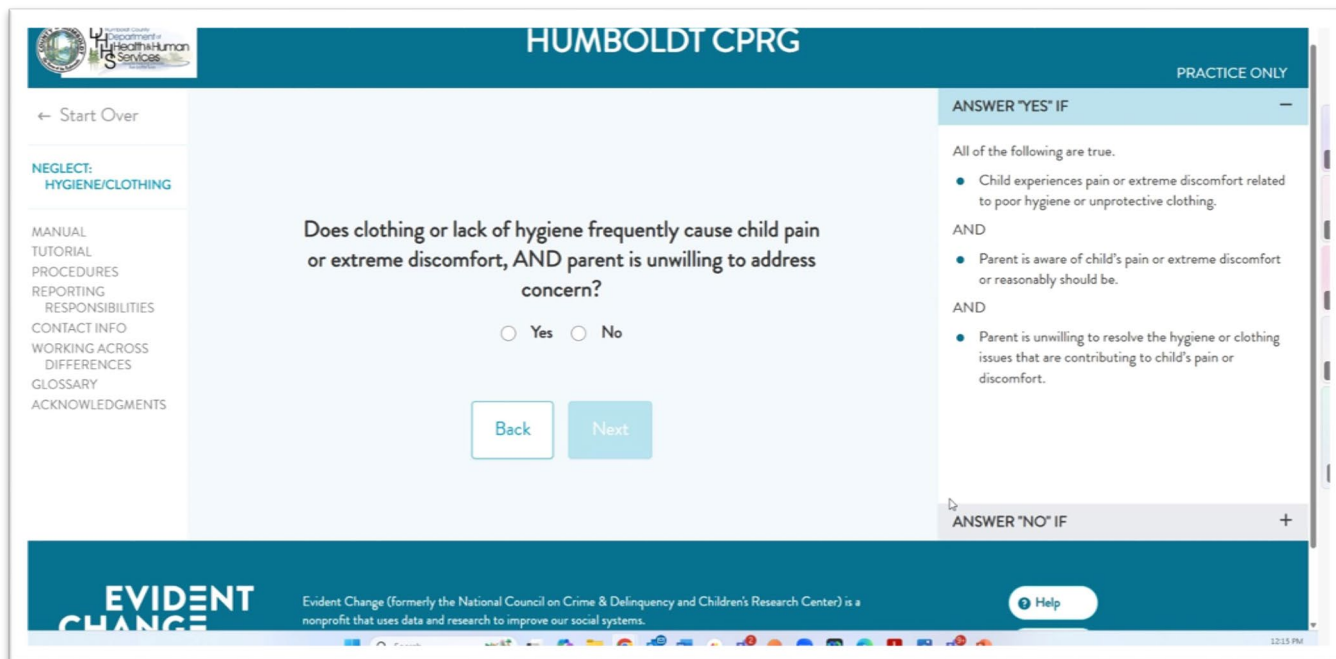
*This bill* would authorize LA County to implement and evaluate a new model for mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect as a two-year pilot. In an effort to deter overreporting, the pilot would deploy an internet-based decision-support tool to be used by select mandated reporters to guide their decision to on whether to make a report.

*Decision-Support Tool.* The decision-support tool that would be authorized by the provisions of this bill would, after answering a series of questions, provide one of four recommendations to the mandated reporter:

- A report to the child protection hotline is required;
- Consultation with the child protection hotline or another entity, as provided by the decision-support tool, is required;
- No report to the child protection hotline is required, but a family may benefit from supportive services; or,
- No action is required.



Humboldt County has used a version of the support tool, and as seen below, it requires a mandated reporter to further refine their observations to quantify whether a report is warranted. By requiring a mandated reporter to explain highly subjective terms such as “dirty” or “smelly” the tool is designed to distinguish between observations that are harmful rather than unfortunate.



The sponsors have indicated they are working with Evident Change, an organization that develops proprietary software, including predictive analytics, used in other areas of the child welfare system in California, to develop the support tool they would like to use in the pilot program.

*Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force.* Under the purview of the California Child Welfare Council (CWC), and in partnership with CDSS, the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting (MRCS) Task Force was established to “lead a coordinated statewide effort to review and reform the mandated reporting system and encourage use of community resources and services that can help to keep children safe and families together.” The purpose of the MRCS Task Force is to develop recommendations and plans to guide California’s reform of mandated reporting laws, policies, and practices. In March of 2023, the CWC unanimously approved recommendations to begin to reform the current mandated reporting structure with the ultimate goal defined as, “. . .to create a child and family well-being system that consists of an integrated continuum of family serving systems that support parents and families in providing safe, stable, and nurturing environments for their children. Essentially, supporting families—not reporting families.”

One of the recommendations from the MRCS Task Force was to require all mandated reporters in California to receive standardized training on child abuse and neglect. Another recommendation requires CDSS to ensure the implementation of AB 2085 (Holden), Chapter 770, Statutes of 2022, which redefined general neglect for purposes of CANRA by excluding a person's economic disadvantage, until such time general neglect is removed as a mandated reporting requirement.

*This bill* aligns with both recommendations by creating a new mandated reporter training that seeks to ensure mandated reporters are not reporting for circumstances that do not rise to the level of general neglect.

*Other Approaches.* According to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) located in Washington D.C. (District), The Keeping DC Families Together DEIB Subcommittee played an integral part in setting the tone and context for the vision of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, the role of the child welfare agency, and the role of the Community Response Model. This group worked to ensure the application of an equity lens on CFSA's practices as the 211 Warmline was developed with a specific focus on understanding the key roles of mandated reporters and mandated supporters. The 211 Warmline established a resource for community responders to identify necessary supports for families that aligned with an understanding of their generational experience of disproportionality and disparity. The development of the 211 Warmline removes a barrier for District residents to access support without bringing their family to the attention of CPS when not necessary. In addition, the DEIB Steering Committee's Training Subcommittee updated the agency's mandated reporter training to include a module focused on understanding and addressing implicit bias for the District's mandated reporter. Recognizing implicit bias in mandated reporting is a national focus for addressing racial inequity in child welfare.

*LA County.* Against the backdrop of mandated reporter reform, the consequences of previous legislation, AB 218 (Gonzalez), Chapter 861, Statutes of 2019, is impacting how LA County addresses victims of abuse and neglect. AB 218 extended the statutes of limitations to a more reasonable timeline to allow victims of abuse to seek legal justice. According to a *Los Angeles Times* article published on February 6, 2025, LA County was hit with a record number of lawsuits last year, "with spending on outside attorneys ballooning to defend against a deluge of child sex abuse claims." The article notes that LA DCFS was the most frequently sued, with 882 cases this year and according to the article, they, "have been hit with thousands of lawsuits in recent years alleging that children were sexually abused in foster home and at probation facilities and a former children's shelter." Another *Los Angeles Times* article published on May 1, 2023, observes, "But three years after the law went into effect, L.A. County — responsible for facilities meant to protect and rehabilitate the region's youth — has emerged in court filings as one of the biggest alleged institutional offenders. . . County officials predicted that they may be forced to spend between \$1.6 billion and \$3 billion to resolve roughly 3,000 claims of sexual abuse that allegedly took place in the county's foster homes, children shelters, and probation camps and halls dating to the 1950s."

*This bill* states that a mandated reporter has satisfied their reporting duties if they completed the training, utilized the required elements of the decision-support tool, and complied with the recommended action provided by the tool. *The bill* further states that the mandated reporter who has satisfied their reporting duties by using the decision-support tool under this pilot would not be subject to civil liability or criminal penalty for failing to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect and is not subject to penalties impacting their professional licenses, credentials, certifications, or other standards qualifying work in a particular field. *The bill* also prohibits the mandated reporter's supervisor, employer, superior, or principal from being subject to civil liability or criminal penalty for the mandated reporter's utilization of the decision support tool and compliance with the recommended action provided by that tool regarding the same incident.

Thus, any victim of abuse who was failed by the adults in their life has no legal remedy in the future.

**Author’s Statement:** According to the Author, “Data shows that mandated reporters often receive inadequate training and support, which leads to over reporting of children and families who do not require a child protective services intervention, particularly in marginalized communities, as well as underreporting of children who may be unsafe.

“[This bill] offers a measured and thoughtful approach to improving this critically important policy through enhanced training and utilization of a decision-support tool to help mandated reporters make more accurate and consistent decisions about when a report is required based on state law. This pilot offers an opportunity to evaluate how standardized training and decision support processes can strengthen child protection efforts while addressing long-standing challenges in the reporting process.

“[This bill] also transforms mandated reporting from merely a reactive policy response to a proactive approach that bolsters the protective factors that help to keep children safe, by connecting families who may be in need to supportive resources upstream, when a report is not required by law. Note: Although [this bill] does not propose provision of supportive resources in lieu of a child protective services intervention, families may be linked with supportive resources even when a report is required by law.”

**Equity Implications:** The provisions of *this bill* seek to address the issues of overreporting and disproportional entry of certain racial and ethnic populations into the child welfare services system. According to data reported by the LAO, the largest percentage of these reports are made by teachers and other school personnel (around 20%) with the second largest percentage coming from law enforcement and other legal professionals (also around 20% in recent years). The LAO notes that allegations from certain reporter types, relative to other reporter types, are much more likely to be substantiated and result in entries to care. Data show reports from law enforcement are the most likely to be substantiated (around 30% substantiation rate in recent years), while reports from teachers and other school personnel are around five to six times less likely to be substantiated (around 5% in recent years). Existing law requires school employers to annually train their employees regarding mandated reporting duties, and requires the training to be aligned with guidance from OCAP, there is not a specific training curriculum that school employers must use. The provisions of *this bill* seek to provide an alternative training approach to mandated reporting.

**Policy Considerations:** The bill currently establishes the pilot program from January 1, 2026, to October 31, 2028.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider establishing a two year timeframe for the pilot program in order to allow maximum flexibility with start dates.*

The bill does not currently provide any alternative for individual employees under the pilot program who may elect to not participate.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider allowing individual participants to opt out of the pilot without penalty or retaliation*

The bill currently makes the provisions that are enumerated in the training component optional.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider making the components mandatory.*

The bill does not preclude the use of predictive analytics in its development of the tool. Given the concerns that existing biases can be baked into these algorithms, there is concern that the tool could inadvertently include this element.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider prohibiting the use of predictive analytics in the development of the support tool.*

The bill requires the tool to be developed through a collaborative process that includes many stakeholders but not CDSS, the state entity that oversees child welfare services. The bill also allows “another entity” in addition to CPS to be consulted.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider including CDSS in the collaborative process and not other unnamed entities.*

The bill, when the support tool recommends that no report to CPS is required but that the family may benefit from supportive services, does not establish any requirements around the minimum standards for those supportive services.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider specifying minimum requirements before a referral to supportive services can be made.*

The bill is currently silent on the type of data that the support tool will be collecting.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider ensuring that confidentiality of all users and subjects is maintained.*

The bill requires a report to be sent to the Legislature at the conclusion of the pilot but does not have clear metrics that are required to be included in the report.

*Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider adding specificity to the elements that will be required in the report to the Legislature.*

**Proposed Committee Amendments:** The Committee proposes amendments to address policy considerations stated above to do the following:

- Strike existing pilot program dates and establish a two-year maximum from the time the bill takes effect.
- Clarify that an employee of an organization that elects to participate in the pilot program may elect to participate. If an employee does not elect to participate, they shall do so without penalty or retaliation.
- Make the training elements enumerated in the bill mandatory and not permissive.
- Prohibit the use of predictive analytics in the development of the support tool.
- Require CDSS to collaborate on the tool’s development.

- Strike requirement for one of the recommendations to be “consultation with another entity as provided by the decision support tool.”
- Specify criteria for support services that will be recommended by the support tool to include:
  - A demonstrated capacity to provide relevant prevention services that are reasonable, meritorious, and that demonstrated success at avoiding out-of-home placements.
  - A willingness to collaborate with local county welfare agencies to coordinate eligibility and enrollment into relevant assistance programs as identified.
  - An ability to implement preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of child welfare involvement which may include support with addressing housing instability or access to healthcare.
  - Equipped to serve diverse populations with broad language capabilities to serve the community.
  - Compliance with regulations and guidelines regarding confidentiality.
  - Knowledge and understanding of current practices that strengthen protective factors and promote child safety and family well-being.
- Ensure that deidentified, aggregated data are collected regarding the individuals served by the decision-support tool.
- Require the report to the Legislature to include the following:
  - The number of times the decision-support tool was used and the corresponding recommendation for each instance.
  - Data on each referral to supportive services and whether the need to make a report to the child protection hotline was subsequently required.
  - Data on the services needed if a child was found to need supportive services.
  - Data on the number of reports to the child protection hotline that were made in the County of Los Angeles at the commencement of the pilot and at its conclusion.
  - Data on frequency of usage of tool for the same family.
- Technical and clarifying amendments

**Double referral:** Should this bill pass out of this committee, it will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Public Safety.

**RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:**

*AB 601 (Jackson) of the current legislative session*, requires CDSS to develop a standardized curriculum for mandated reporters and requires their employers to provide this training within the first three months of their employment. *AB 601 is set to be heard by the Assembly Committee on Human Services on April 8, 2025.*

*SB 1126 (Min) of 2023*, would have clarified that a child who witnessed or was present during a domestic violence incident does not alone meet the definition of child abuse or neglect as outlined by CANRA, and thus does not require a report from a mandated reporter on the basis of witnessing an incident of domestic violence. *SB 1126 was placed on the Senate Inactive File.*

*AB 2085 (Holden), Chapter 770, Statutes of 2022*, redefined "general neglect" for purposes of CANRA by excluding a person's economic disadvantage.

*SB 1085 (Kamlager), Chapter 832, Statutes of 2022*, prohibited a child from being found to be suffering, or at substantial risk of suffering, serious physical harm or illness for purposes of placing the child under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court due solely to the family's homelessness, indigence, or other conditions of financial difficulty, and clarified legislative intent that families should not be subjected to juvenile court jurisdiction or separated from their families due to conditions of financial difficulty alone.

*AB 218 (Gonzalez), Chapter 861, Statutes of 2019*, extended the time for commencing a civil action based on injuries resulting from childhood sexual assault to 22 years after the plaintiff reaches majority (i.e., until 40 years of age) or within five years of the date the plaintiff discovers or reasonably should have discovered that the psychological injury or illness occurring after the age of majority was caused by the abuse, whichever occurs later.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors (Co-Sponsor)  
County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)  
Los Angeles County Office of Education (Co-Sponsor)  
A New Way of Life Re-entry Project  
All for Kids  
Alliance for Children's Rights  
Association of Community Human Service Agencies  
California Alliance of Caregivers  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
California Family Resource Association  
CASA of Los Angeles  
Child Abuse Prevention Center and Its Affiliates Safe Kids California, Prevent Child Abuse California and The California Family Resource Association  
Children's Institute  
Family Resource and Referral Center of San Joaquin  
Girls Club of Los Angeles  
Inter-Tribal Wellness Coalition, INC.  
LA Best Babies Network

Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, INC.  
Loyola Law School, the Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative  
Public Counsel  
Seneca Family of Agencies  
Shields for Families  
Southern California Grantmakers

**Opposition**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jessica Langtry / HUM. S. / (916) 319-2089