

Date of Hearing: April 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 1634 (Davies) – As Amended April 9, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Child health and safety: “Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids” license plate program

**SUMMARY:** Makes updates to the Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids (Kids’ Plate) specialty license plate program by increasing initial and renewal fees and by revising the allocation of funds derived from that program for childhood injury prevention and child abuse prevention, as well as childcare provider licensing, training, and recruitment. Authorizes Legacy License Plate applicants to include one of the four Kids’ Plate symbols on their plate for an additional \$50 fee, requires those fees to be split equally between the Child Health and Safety Fund and the California Environmental License Plate Fund, and specifies that adding the symbols does not create a new specialty license plate. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Repeals existing law regarding the California Legacy License Plate Program, which authorizes the issuance of historical-style plates, establishes associated fees, and directs revenues to the California Environmental License Plate Fund on July 1, 2027, and instead reestablishes the Legacy Plate program operative July 1, 2027, while retaining its core structure and associated fees, but adding authorization for applicants to include Kids’ Plate symbols for an additional \$50 fee, with those new revenues split equally between the Child Health and Safety Fund and the California Environmental License Plate Fund.
- 2) Makes legislative intent that the specialized license plate that allows applicants to include Kids’ Plate symbols to their Legacy Plate be considered a specialized license plate within the Legacy Plate and that the specialized license plate does not constitute the creation of a new type of specialized license plate.
- 3) Repeals existing law regarding the Kids’ Plate program, which authorizes issuance of specialized plates with symbol options, establishes associated fees and revenue allocations to the Child Health and Safety Fund on July 1, 2027, and instead reestablishes the Kids’ Plate program operative July 1, 2027, while retaining its core structure and revenue deposit into the Child Health and Safety Fund, but increasing fees from:
  - a) \$50 to \$90 for initial plate issuance of personalized plates;
  - b) \$40 to \$80 for each renewal of registration for personalized plates;
  - c) \$20 to \$40 for initial plate issuance for assigned plates;
  - d) \$15 to \$30 for each renewal of registration for assigned plates; and,
  - e) With all other fees, including the \$15 transfer fee for assigned and personalized plates and replacement fees, if the plates become damaged or unserviceable, remaining unchanged—\$20 for assigned and \$35 for personalized plates.

- 4) Repeals existing law regarding the Child Health and Safety Fund, which allocates 50% of Kids' Plate revenues to the California Department of Social Service (CDSS) for childcare licensing and administration plus an additional \$501,000; 25% to child abuse prevention programs, including 22.5% to county Children's Trust Funds and 2.5% to the State Children's Trust Fund; and, 25% to various child health and safety programs on July 1, 2027, and instead reestablishes the Child Health and Safety Fund operative July 1, 2027, to allocate 100% of combined Kids' Plate and Legacy Plate revenues, upon appropriation by the Legislature, restructured as follows:
- a) Expands revenue base to include both Kids' Plate and Legacy Plates, rather than only Kids' Plate revenues, while retaining revenues from civil penalties on child daycare facility providers to be made available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to CDSS exclusively for the technical assistance, orientation, training and education of child daycare facility providers;
  - b) Revises the 50% childcare allocations of Kids' Plate revenue as follows:
    - i) Reduces CDSS' share from 50% of Kids Plate revenues to 25% of total revenues for the childcare licensing branch for the administration and salary of the childcare licensing branch chief, but not less than the allocation appropriated by the Legislature during the 2024-25 fiscal year and every fiscal year thereafter, including any cost of living adjustments, to support administering the California Child Day Care Act, while maintaining the additional \$501,000 set-aside and minimum funding floor for site visits, monitoring responsibility of the childcare advocate program, training for investigative and licensing field staff, and the salary of the childcare licensing branch chief;
    - ii) Creates a new dedicated 22.5% allocation of total revenues to First 5 county commissions for childcare workforce recruitment, education and training for licensed and license-exempt providers, distributed as follows:
      - 1. Half of these funds are to be distributed equally to the First 5 county commissions in counties with a population greater than 500,000; and,
      - 2. The other half of these funds are to be distributed equally to the First 5 county commissions in counties with a population less than or equal to 500,000; and,
    - iii) Creates a new dedicated 2.5% allocation of total revenues to the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) to support:
      - 1. New childcare provider health and safety education and training programs, including review and approval of training, onsite reviews to ensure curriculum adherence and quality, and coordination with relevant bodies to improve access, quality, and affordability of childcare, including childcare provider recruitment and planning agencies, academic institutions, and childcare and child development councils; and,
      - 2. The California Emergency Medical Services for Children Act of 1996;

- c) Revises the 25% childhood injury prevention allocation of Kids' Plate revenue as follows:
- i) Creates a new dedicated 20% allocation of total revenues to each of the First 5 county commissions that elect to receive the funds based on an annual survey of all 58 county commissions conducted by the nonprofit staffing the Safer California Project (California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health), and reported to the appropriate state agency charged with the actual allocation of the funds to the First 5 county commissions (State Controller), distributed as follows:
    1. County commissions in counties with populations over 100,000 shall receive equal shares of 16% of total revenues for distribution to county commissions opting into receiving these funds based on the survey completed; and,
    2. County commissions in counties with populations equal to or under 100,000 shall receive equal shares of 4% of total revenues for distribution to county commissions opting into receiving these funds based on the survey completed.
    3. Requires the county commissions receiving these funds to only utilize these funds for programs that address specified categories that are either to be carried out within a two-year period or whose implementation is dependent upon one-time initial funding;
    4. Requires each county commission electing to receive these funds to use funds for any of the following:
      - a. To support local programs that further unintentional injury prevention in one or any of the specified unintentional injury categories;
      - b. To supplement and not supplant existing funding supporting programs furthering child health and safety and aligned with childhood unintentional injury prevention;
      - c. To promote and practice those evidence-based best prevention practices addressing childhood unintentional injury provided or recommended by the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan;
      - d. At the county commission's discretion, to participate with the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project;
      - e. Where appropriate, to collaborate with regional or local childhood unintentional injury prevention coalitions or programs, including childhood unintentional injury prevention coalitions or programs in tribal lands; or,
      - f. To participate at the annual California Children and Families Commission conference but only if that conference has programs or tracks of activities focused on childhood unintentional injury prevention and participate in the biennial Safer California Unintentional Injury Prevention conference;

- ii) Revises the categories of childhood unintentional injury issues that allocated funds can be used for by replacing fire safety with home fire and burn safety and family disaster planning, adding cardiac arrest to sports-related issues, and adding unintentional injuries associated with mental health;
- iii) Reduces the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH's) share from 25% of Kids' Plate revenue to 2.5% of total revenue for:
  - 1. Technical assistance and distribution of evidence-based prevention practices information to childhood injury prevention programs;
  - 2. Oversight and accountability of these programs, as reported annually to CDPH by the organization providing administration and staffing for the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project (California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health); and,
  - 3. Provide planning, financial, and attendance support to the biennial Safer California Unintentional Injury Prevention conference;
- iv) Creates a new dedicated 2.5% allocation of total revenue to the nonprofit organization providing administration and staffing the Safer California Project (California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health) with the responsibility to do all of the following:
  - 1. Support statewide networking of local childhood unintentional injury prevention coalitions and programs;
  - 2. Support evidence-based, best practice technical assistance and training programs for childhood unintentional injury prevention, including sharing successful local models of unintentional injury prevention, for local prevention coalitions, programs, and county commissions;
  - 3. Support the updating of childhood unintentional injury prevention strategic planning identification of the top 10 action priorities necessary to support the state ending unintentional injury as the leading cause of death and hospitalizations of California's children and youth through 19 years of age;
  - 4. Planning activities, administration, and staff support for the biennial Safer California Unintentional Injury Prevention conference;
  - 5. Support public policy to prevent childhood unintentional injury;
  - 6. Conduct an annual survey of the county commissions to determine which of the county commissions elect to receive this funding, and to transmit that survey result to the state for distribution of the funding to the county commission; and,
  - 7. Provide the CDPH childhood injury prevention branch with an annual report on actions carried out; and,

- d) Maintains the child abuse prevention 25% allocation, but explicitly codifies:
  - i) 22.5% of total revenues to county Children's Trust Fund; and,
  - ii) 2.5% of total revenues to the state's Children's Trust Fund.
- 5) Provides that the EMSA's use of funds related to lifeguard workforce data collection and reporting is contingent on the enactment of AB 1639 (Davies) of 2026, making those provisions operative on July 1, 2027, only if AB 1639 is passed and becomes law.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to establish the California Legacy License Plate Program and create and issue a series of specialized license plates as California Legacy License Plates that replicate the look of California license plates from the state's past. (Vehicle Code [VEH] § 5004.3)
- 2) Establishes the Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids license plate program and sets fees for the initial, renewal, transfer, and replacement of the plates. (VEH § 5072)
- 3) Creates within the State Treasury the Child Health and Safety Fund and requires moneys for the fund to be derived from the Kids' Plates program and that civil penalties on child daycare facility providers be deposited into this fund. Requires revenue to be allocated as follows: 50%, plus \$501,000, to CDSS for childcare licensing and administration; 25% to CDSS for child abuse prevention (90% of which is deposited into the county's Children's Trust Fund and 10% of which is deposited in the State Children's Trust Fund); and, 25% to CDPH to support child health and safety programs that address any of the specified list of childhood unintentional injury areas. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] § 18285)
- 4) Requires the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) of CDSS to regulate childcare licensees through an organizational unit separate from that used to regulate all other licensing programs. Requires CDSS to notify the appropriate legislative committees whenever actual staffing levels of licensing program analysts within the childcare licensing branch drops more than 10% below authorized positions, and for the budget for the childcare licensing branch to be included as a separate entry within CDSS department budget. (Health and Safety Code [HSC] § 1596.816)
- 5) Establishes requirements related to the licensing and administrative provisions of the California Child Day Care Act. (HSC §§ 1596.70-1597.21 *et seq.*)
- 6) Authorizes the county, in the event a county elects to participate in the California Children and Families Program, and satisfies the specified requirements set forth in existing law, to establish a county commission that is either a legal public entity separate from the county or an agency of the county with independent authority over the strategic plan. (HSC § 130140.1)
- 7) Declares legislative intent that specified priorities and programs be funded and implemented in the order they are listed, and that each priority and program may be funded and implemented independently of the other priorities and programs. Requires the Directors of the DMV and CDSS to annually make a determination whether the total annual receipts for

the Kids' Plate program are sufficient to cover these priorities and programs and, if so, for CDSS to implement that priority or program. (WIC § 18285.5)

- 8) Requires that a county board of supervisors establish a county Children's Trust Fund. Requires that money in the county Children's Trust Fund be used to fund child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. (WIC §§ 18965 *et seq.*)
- 9) Creates in the State Treasury, the State Children's Trust Fund, and requires money from the fund to be allocated to CDSS for the purpose of funding child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs, as specified. (WIC § 18969)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

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

**Background:** *Kids Plate & the Child Health and Safety Fund.* The Kids' Plate program allows vehicle owners to select a specialty license plate featuring a hand, heart, star, or plus symbol. Fees from these specialty plates are deposited in the Child Health and Safety Fund within the State Treasury. This fund is supported by revenues generated through the Kids' Plate program as well as civil penalties assessed against childcare providers.

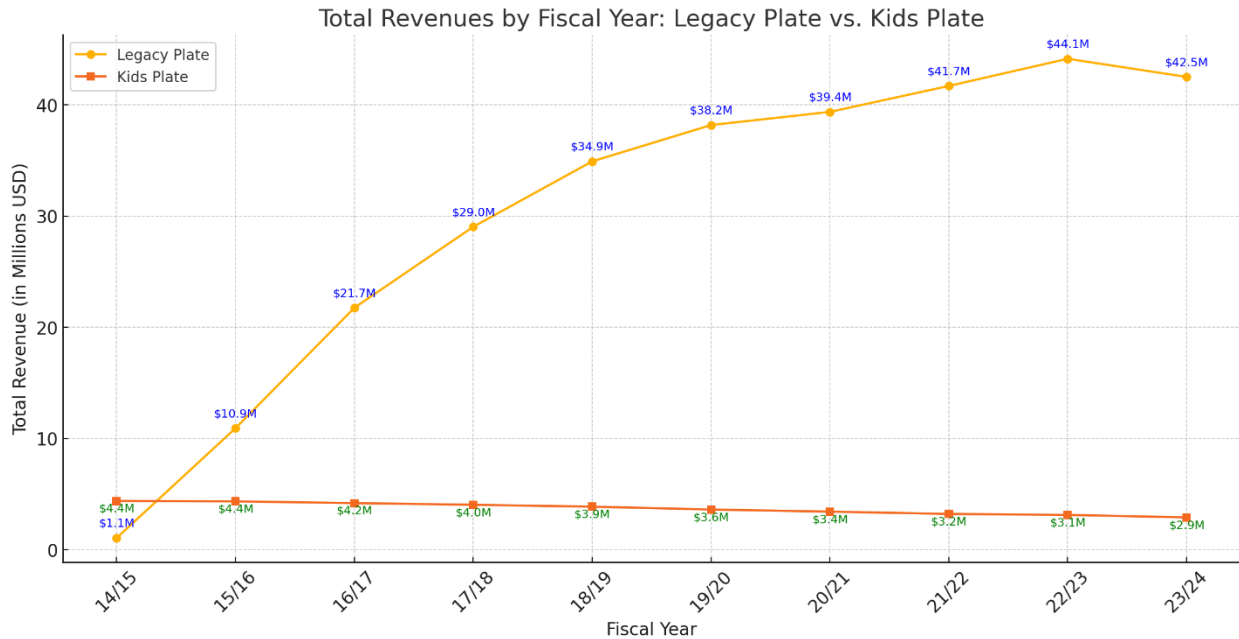
Under existing law, revenues deposited into the Child Health and Safety Fund are allocated as follows:

- 50%, plus \$501,000 annually, to CDSS for childcare licensing and administration;
- 25% to CDSS for child abuse prevention:
  - 90% to county Children's Trust Funds; and,
  - 10% to the State Children's Trust Fund.
- 25% to CDPH for statewide childhood injury prevention education, training, and technical assistance.

There are two major provisions to this bill:

- 1) Increasing Kids' Plate fees to align more closely with current DMV specialty license plate pricing; and,
- 2) Restructuring the distribution of license plate revenues by allocating 100% of revenues from both the Kids' Plate and a portion of Legacy Plate revenues deposited into the Child Health and Safety Fund across specified purposes, including childcare licensing, childcare workforce development, childcare health and safety training, childhood injury prevention programs, and child abuse prevention programs, while establishing new allocations for First 5 county commissions, the EMSA, and the California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health, and reducing the share allocated to childcare licensing.

According to last year’s Assembly Transportation Committee analysis, the Kids’ Plate program generated \$2.9 million in revenue in 2023-24 but has experienced a decline of more than \$1.5 million in annual revenue since the introduction of the Legacy License Plate.



*Proposed Distribution Structure.* As proposed by *this bill*, the new structure would be as follows: 100% of total revenues from the Kids’ Plate program and a portion of Legacy Plate revenues deposited into the Child Health and Safety Fund would be available, upon appropriation, for the following issue areas: childcare licensing, childcare workforce development, child health and safety, and child abuse prevention programs, allocated as follows:

Childcare Licensing and Administration:

- 1) 25% of total revenues would be allocated to CDSS for childcare licensing administration, including licensing inspections and site visits; monitoring responsibilities of the childcare advocate program; training for licensing and investigative staff; administration of licensing programs; and the salary of the Childcare Licensing Branch Chief. In addition, \$501,000 annually would continue to be provided outside of the percentage allocation.

Childcare Workforce Recruitment, Training, and Safety:

- 2) 22.5% of total revenues would be allocated to the 58 First 5 county commissions on a per-capita basis to support childcare workforce recruitment, training, and education for new and existing providers, distributed as follows:
  - a) 11.25% of total revenues distributed equally among First 5 commissions in counties with populations greater than 500,000; and,
  - b) 11.25% of total revenues distributed equally among First 5 commissions in counties with populations of 500,000 or fewer.

- 3) 2.5% of total revenues would be allocated to the EMSA for childcare health and safety training oversight, including: review and approval of childcare health and safety training programs; onsite monitoring of training program delivery; coordination with workforce and training entities; and, support for EMS for Children programs.

Childhood Injury Prevention Programs:

- 4) 20% of total revenues would be allocated to First 5 county commissions that elect to receive funding for childhood injury prevention programs, distributed as follows:
  - a) 16% of total revenues distributed equally among participating counties with populations greater than 100,000; and,
  - b) 4% of total revenues distributed equally among participating counties with populations of 100,000 or fewer.

Funds must be used for programs addressing childhood injury prevention, including but not limited to vehicular safety, drowning prevention, playground safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety, gun safety, fire safety, poisoning prevention, and other unintentional injury categories.

- 5) 2.5% of total revenues would be allocated to CDPH for statewide technical assistance; oversight and accountability of injury prevention programs; and, coordination and support of statewide prevention efforts and conferences.
- 6) 2.5% of total revenues would be allocated to the California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health to support statewide networking of local childhood unintentional injury prevention programs; training and technical assistance; updating of childhood unintentional injury prevention strategic planning and policy development; administration of the biennial Safer California Unintentional Injury Prevention conference; providing CDPH with an annual report on actions carried out; and, conducting the annual survey of First 5 participation.

Child Abuse Prevention:

- 7) 22.5% of total revenues would be deposited into county Children's Trust Funds to support community-based child abuse prevention services.
- 8) 2.5% of total revenues would be deposited into the State Children's Trust Fund for statewide public education, training, and technical assistance.

See below for the summary table detailing the entity-to-entity percentage changes of total revenues under existing law and this bill:

Entity/Recipient	Existing Law	After July 1, 2027 (this bill)
CDSS – Childcare Licensing Administration	50% of total Kids' Plate revenues + \$501,000 annually	25% of total revenues + \$501,000 annually
First 5 County Commissions (Total)	0%	42.5% of total revenues 22.5% childcare workforce + 20% childhood injury prevention
First 5 commissions in counties with: >500,000 population; >100,000 population	0%	11.25% childcare workforce; 16% childhood injury prevention
First 5 commissions in counties with: ≤ 500,000 population; ≤100,000 population	0%	11.25% childcare workforce; 4% childhood injury prevention
EMSA – Childcare Health & Safety Training Oversight	0%	2.5% of total revenues
CDPH – Childhood Injury Prevention Programs	25% of total Kids' Plate revenues	2.5% of total revenues
California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health (Safer California Project administrator)	0%	2.5% of total revenues
Children's Trust Funds – Child Abuse Prevention (Total)	25% of total Kids' Plate revenues	25% of total revenues
County Children's Trust Fund	22.5% of total Kids' Plate revenues	22.5% of total revenues
State Children's Trust Fund	2.5% of total Kids' Plate revenues	2.5% of total revenues
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Overall, *this bill* would significantly change the long-term purpose of the Kids' Plate program by expanding and restructuring the use of revenues across childcare, workforce, and child health and safety programs. Under existing law, the largest share of revenues supports childcare licensing and oversight administered by CDSS, with the remainder split between child abuse prevention through county and state children's trust funds and childhood injury prevention programs administered by CDPH.

*This bill* would replace that structure with a new ongoing allocation that distributes 100% of revenues from the Kid's Plate program and a portion of Legacy Plate revenues deposited into the

Child Health and Safety Fund across specified purposes. *This bill* would reduce CDSS' share from 50% to 25%, create new dedicated funding streams for childcare workforce recruitment and training through First 5 county commissions (22.5%) and childcare health and safety training oversight through EMSA (2.5%).

Moreover, an additional 20% of total revenues would be allocated to First 5 county commissions for childhood injury prevention programs, 2.5% to CDPH for statewide oversight and coordination, and 2.5% to the nonprofit administering the Safer California Project, the California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health, for statewide planning and support activities. *This bill* maintains the overall 25% allocation for child abuse prevention (22.5% to county Children's Trust Fund and 2.5% to the State's Children's Trust Fund).

*Licensed Child Care.* The California Child Day Care Facilities Act governs the licensure, maintenance, and operation of child daycare centers and family daycare homes in California. This Act, along with regulations in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, establishes essential standards for health and safety, staff-to-child ratios, and provider training requirements. CDSS is responsible for licensing and monitoring childcare facilities to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.

*California Department of Social Services' Community Care Licensing Division.* As of June 2025, CCLD, within CDSS, oversees the licensing of approximately 68,000 community care facilities statewide, including childcare, children's residential, and adult and senior care facilities. Within CCLD, the Child Care Licensing Program (CCLP) ensures licensed childcare facilities meet health and safety standards through facility monitoring, technical assistance, and collaboration with providers, parents, and community organizations.

CCLP conducts pre-licensure inspections for new facilities and unannounced visits to licensed providers within statutorily required timeframes. The program operates through more than 20 regional offices responsible for monitoring 43,569 licensed childcare facilities that collectively serve more than one million children. The program relies on multiple funding sources, including revenues from the Kids' Plate program. These funds support key licensing activities such as facility inspections, the Child Care Advocate Program, training for licensing staff, and administrative functions including the salary of the Chief of the Child Care Licensing Branch.

*The Child Care Advocate Program,* administered through CDSS' CCLP, serves as a bridge between childcare licensing offices and communities. Established in statute and supported in part by Kids' Plate revenues, the program allows CDSS to place childcare advocates in regional licensing offices to assist providers, parents, and community partners.

Childcare advocates provide information about licensing requirements, support community outreach, and collaborate with childcare resource and referral agencies, local governments, and community organizations. Advocates also help coordinate responses to complaints and concerns related to childcare providers and promote access to safe, high-quality childcare.

*This bill* would reduce allocations for childcare licensing, potentially affecting the resources available to CDSS to support inspections, licensing oversight, and training activities. According to the Fund Condition Statement, CDSS received approximately \$2.7 million from the Child

Health and Safety Fund through the Kids' Plate program in 2025-26.<sup>1</sup> According to the sponsors, because total revenues would now include a portion of Legacy Plate revenues, the reduction in CDSS' allocation from 50% to 25% would be offset by the increased revenue base, resulting in a minimal net impact. However, it is unclear whether this assumption is supported by available data.

*California Department of Public Health* is responsible for protecting and improving the health of Californians through public health programs, policy development, data analysis, and community partnerships. CDPH leads statewide initiatives to reduce preventable injuries among children and adolescents through its Injury and Violence Prevention Branch. The branch conducts surveillance and research on injury trends, develops prevention strategies, provides training and technical assistance to local programs, and supports public education campaigns aimed at reducing preventable injuries.

Through the Kids' Plate program, CDPH provides funding and support to local organizations implementing evidence-based injury prevention strategies. These efforts address a wide range of risks, including vehicular safety, drowning, poisoning, pedestrian safety, and sleep-related deaths. The program also supports the distribution of safety equipment to communities. For example, in recent years, dozens of nonprofit organizations have received funding, resulting in the distribution of thousands of safety items such as child safety seats, helmets, and smoke alarms.

*This bill* would reduce the share of revenues administered by CDPH for statewide injury prevention activities, and instead, direct a larger portion to First 5 county commissions and a smaller portion to EMSA and a nonprofit-administered initiative, the Coalition for Children's Safety and Health.

*First 5 California* was established by Proposition 10 in 1998 through a tobacco tax intended to support programs improving the health, education, and well-being of children from birth to five years of age. First 5 California distributes funds to all 58 counties, each of which operates an independent First 5 county commission. Funding is allocated based on county birth rates, allowing counties to design programs that address local needs. First 5 programs commonly support early learning, health services, family support programs, and community-based initiatives for young children and their families.

*This bill* would establish new ongoing funding streams to First 5 county commissions for childcare provider recruitment and training (22.5% of total revenues) and for childhood injury prevention programs (20%), including the option to use funds to participate in related conferences and statewide coordination activities.

*California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health (CCCSH)* is a nonprofit organization created in 1991 that works to prevent unintentional childhood injuries through statewide coordination, technical assistance, and policy development. Since 2013, CCCSH has been leading the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project, also known as the Safer California Project, which supports implementation of the biennial Safer California Unintentional Injury Prevention Conference. Through the Safer California Project, CCCSH facilitates collaboration among local injury prevention programs, supporting training and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2025-26/pdf/Enacted/GovernorsBudget/4000/5180FCS.pdf>

technical assistance for local coalitions, and promotes best practices for injury prevention across the state.

*This bill* would establish a dedicated allocation of total revenues to CCCSH to support administration of the Safer California Project, including statewide coordination, training, and planning activities.

*County and State Children's Trust Funds* were established in 1983 and are dedicated funding mechanisms used to support child abuse and neglect prevention efforts in California. Revenues from the Kids' Plate program are deposited into these funds to support prevention programs at both the local and statewide levels.

County Children's Trust Funds operate at the local level, through a commission, board, or council established by the county board of supervisors to coordinate child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention activities. These activities often focus on strengthening families, preventing child maltreatment, and connecting families to supportive services before abuse or neglect occurs. The funds also support local child abuse prevention coordinating councils, which bring together community stakeholders to coordinate prevention efforts and resources.

The State's Children's Trust Fund, administered by CDSS through the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, supports statewide prevention activities such as public education campaigns, dissemination and research, and technical assistance for local prevention programs. The SCTF derives money from state income tax voluntary donations, a percentage of birth certificate fees from state vital statistics, and a portion of the Kids' Plate revenue.

*This bill* maintains the current allocation of revenues dedicated to child abuse prevention, continuing the distribution of funds between the county Children's Trust Fund (22.5%) and the State Children's Trust Fund (2.5%).

**Author's Statement:** According to the Author, "[This bill] strengthens California's commitment to child abuse prevention, childhood injury prevention, and childcare by modernizing and improving the Kids Plates specialty license plate program. The bill updates DMV pricing for Kids Plates which has not been adjusted since 1992 to bring it in line with other specialty plates, significantly increasing revenue for the Child Health and Safety Fund. It also allows Legacy (Black, Blue, and Yellow) license plate owners to add the Kids Plates symbols such as the heart, plus sign, handprint, and star to their plates, generating new funding for children's safety and the environmental programs supported by Legacy plates. In addition, [this bill] addresses longstanding inequities in how Kids Plates funds are distributed. The bill ensures all 58 counties receive a fair share by utilizing the existing First 5 county commissions to help distribute funding for childhood injury prevention and childcare provider recruitment and training at the community level. At the same time, it protects dedicated funding for the Department of Social Services' Child Care Licensing Division and the Department of Public Health's Injury Prevention Branch so they can continue carrying out their critical work to keep children safe."

**Equity Implications:** By reducing the share of total revenues allocated to childcare licensing administered by CDSS from 50% to 25%, while simultaneously expanding the revenue base to include a portion of Legacy Plate revenues, *this bill* may affect a key funding stream that supports inspections and enforcement intended to protect children in licensed childcare settings, though the extent of any impact, particularly for low-income families and working parents who rely on these services, is unclear. *This bill* also substantially reduces the share of funding

administered by CDPH for statewide childhood injury prevention activities from 25% to 2.5%, potentially affecting programs designed to reach children across California, including communities with higher rates of preventable injuries.

At the same time, *this bill* redirects a substantial share of revenues to local entities, including allocating 22.5% for childcare workforce activities and 20% of injury prevention programs through First 5 county commissions, which may allow programs to better target community-specific needs. However, relying more heavily on local implementation could result in variation in program availability and capacity across counties, potentially leading to uneven access to childcare supports and injury prevention resources depending on local participation and infrastructure.

**Policy Considerations:** Under existing law, a significant share of Kids' Plate revenues supports childcare licensing and oversight administered by CDSS and statewide childhood injury prevention activities administered by CDPH. *This bill* would reduce the share of funds directed to CDSS and significantly decrease the portion administered by CDPH, instead redirecting a substantial share of total revenues to First 5 county commissions and a smaller portion to a non-profit organization, resulting in funds that currently support state agencies being shifted to local commissions and a nonprofit affiliated with the bill's sponsors.

While First 5 county commissions are public entities subject to state and local accountability frameworks, directing funds in statute to a specific nonprofit raises additional oversight considerations. Unlike state agencies, which are subject to established budgetary controls, procurement requirements, and legislative oversight, a nonprofit designated in statute may not be subject to the same level of transparency, competitive selection, or ongoing performance evaluation. While *the bill* includes a requirement to report annually to CDPH on its activities, it does not appear to establish broader requirements related to contracting standards, auditing, or measurable outcomes tied to the nonprofit's use of funds.

As a result, the proposed structure may raise questions regarding accountability for public dollars, including how funds would be monitored, what safeguards would be in place to prevent misuse, and how the Legislature would evaluate program effectiveness over time. In the absence of clearly defined oversight mechanisms, there may be an increased risk of inconsistent implementation or challenges in ensuring that funds are used efficiently and for their intended purposes.

*Should this bill move forward, the Author may wish to consider whether redirecting funds in this manner aligns with the intended purpose of the Kid' Plate program and the state's broader approach to administering child health and safety programs.*

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

**Arguments in Support:** CCCSH and co-sponsor of the bill writes, "The bill creates no new costs to the state's general fund but instead injects new contribution funding to strategically help - in all 58 counties - support childcare new provider recruitment and training, childhood injury prevention, and child abuse prevention programs. Kids Plates pricing is still stuck at the 1992 level and far below the 2026 pricing in place for the other similar DMV specialty license plate programs. By updating the Department of Motor Vehicles' pricing of Kids Plates, to be closer to the pricing of other DMV similar specialty vehicle license plates such as Save the Whale,

Yosemite Park, Arts Council plates, the Kids Plates updated pricing will greatly increase the amount of funding for children's safety programs.

“The changes made in [this bill] will open new marketing opportunities for vehicle owners in all 58 counties and give vehicle owners an increased reason to donate to children's safety by purchasing a Kids Plate or a Legacy plate using one of the four symbols for their vehicle. Currently the Kids Plates funding distribution for childhood injury prevention is not distributed to all 58 counties. Over the last decade less than 25 counties have received Kids Plates childhood injury prevention funding. The new funding distribution reforms in [this bill] will ensure all 58 counties will get their fair share of the Kids Plates funding.”

**Arguments in Opposition:** An individual writes, “[This bill] would fundamentally alter that framework. Without statistical justification or demonstrated program failure, the bill redirects a portion of Kids' Plates revenue to First 5, which would in turn transfer funds to CCCSH to support its “California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan” and related activities in this bill. CCCSH is a nongovernmental entity not subject to the same accountability, procurement safeguards, or oversight as CDPH, and it lacks CDPH's demonstrated capacity to administer statewide prevention programming. Additional concerns warrant opposition:

1. **Equity Claims Unsupported by Evidence.** Assertions that CDPH fails to distribute funds equitably are opinions, not facts. The current program operates through an open, competitive “Request for Application” process accessible to any qualified county or nonprofit entity.
2. **Mission Misalignment.** First 5 focuses on children ages 0–5, while the Kids' Plates program addresses unintentional injuries among all children ages 0–18. [This bill] would expand First 5 beyond its core mission and expertise, while reducing available funding for existing beneficiaries serving older children.
3. **Ineffective Funding Formula.** Based on projected revenues, the proposed formula could result in awards as small as \$3,000–\$5,000 per county—amounts unlikely to support meaningful, sustainable injury-prevention initiatives.
4. **Revenue Uncertainty.** The bill lacks analysis regarding whether changes to the license plate fee structure would increase or decrease participation and overall revenue, creating unnecessary fiscal risk.

“In summary, [this bill] undermines a longstanding, trusted program, redirects funds without competitive safeguards, and introduces mission drift and fiscal uncertainty.”

#### **PRIOR AND RELATED LEGISLATION:**

**AB 997 (Stefani) of 2025**, was substantially similar to this bill. *AB 997 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.*

**AB 2828 (Bains) of 2024**, was substantially similar to this bill. *AB 2828 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.*

**SB 608 (Becker) of 2023**, was substantially similar to this bill. *SB 608 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.*

*AB 2602 (Salas) of 2022*, was substantially similar to this bill. *AB 2602* was referred to the Assembly Committee on Human Services but was not set for a hearing.

*AB 1336 (Smith), Chapter 47, Statutes of 2019*, added to the list of child health and safety concerns for which funds deposited into the Child Health and Safety Fund may be expended to include: pedestrian safety, childhood poisoning, including from prescription medications, lead, and other toxic substances, sleep suffocation and sudden infant death syndrome, children left in parked cars and children run over by cars moving forward or backward; and sports-related concussions, heat stroke, and spinal injury safety.

*SB 1158 (McGuire) of 2018*, was substantially similar to this bill. *SB 1158* was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

*AB 3087 (Speier), Chapter 136, Statutes of 1992*, created the California Kids' Plate program, as well as the Children's Health and Safety Special Fund to capture and expend the revenues from the Kids' Plate license sales and renewals.

#### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

##### **Support**

California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health (Co-Sponsor)  
Center for Public Interest Law/Children's Advocacy Institute/University of San Diego (Co-Sponsor)  
First 5 Association of California

##### **Opposition**

One private citizen

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