

Fact Sheet, SB 597

Child Welfare Services

Senator Carol Liu, 21st SD.
As introduced February 27, 2009

New Federal Legislation Requires State Action

In 2008, Congress passed and the President signed the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351). The bill has many provisions, and several pieces of legislation will be introduced to conform California law to various provisions. Legislative action is needed in order for California's children and families to benefit from the opportunities in the federal bill.

Summary

SB 597, in general, provides for improved communication between government and the relatives of children entering foster care, improved health-care record keeping for foster children, and necessary amendments to state law to ensure maximum federal participation in California's child welfare budget.

Specifics

The bill includes these provisions:

- Directs the State Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide counties with easier access to information that will help identify relatives who might care for a foster child.
- Allows foster youth, who are over 18, to live in an independent, supervised home setting and allows travel costs of educational purposes to be part of the care and supervision provided to a foster child.
- Deems an independent foster care adolescent to be eligible for Medi-Cal benefits without any additional paperwork.

- Directs the DSS to develop a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for a child in foster care.
- Requires DSS and licensed adoption agencies to provide information regarding the federal adoption tax credit to any individual who is adopting or considering adoption.
- Directs DSS to apply for a "family connection grant" to help children in foster care or at risk of entering foster care to connect to family members.
- Makes changes in foster parent training programs in community colleges to ensure that they include Kin-GAP caregivers, when funds are available.
- Under certain conditions, would allow former foster youth who declined to stay in foster care after their 18th birthday to reenter foster care up until they reach age 21.

No New Costs or Programs

The bill is drafted to use new federal funds, available through P.L. 110-351 or through the federal stimulus package, to cover any new costs associated with program improvements that SB 597 prescribes.

Do you have questions? Comments? Would you like to support SB 597?

Please Contact:

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