

Assemblymember Matt Dababneh

Caregiver Evaluations

AB 1416 Fact Sheet

IN BRIEF:

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that children removed from their homes because of abandonment, abuse, or neglect are adequately cared for in California's foster care system. It ensures that the state has additional information about the homes and providers caring for these vulnerable young people and ensures that foster youth are given the opportunity to provide feedback about the quality of care they are receiving.

THE ISSUE/PROBLEM:

Currently, there are more than 63,000 foster children in California.¹ Foster children have been abused and neglected and are facing additional trauma and uncertainty as a result of being removed from their homes and families. The state has taken responsibility for them and must ensure they are being cared for properly.

When a child enters foster care, they are often placed in homes and facilities where a caseworker can find an open bed, rather than in a home that can best meet that child's needs. One reason for this is that we do not have a system that tracks and evaluates foster homes and facilities based on their strengths and weaknesses in order to make appropriate decisions on where to place children.

Children in foster care, just like all children, need caring and engaged adults to support their well-being. Currently, licensing agencies also lack a satisfactory process to compile, track, and evaluate feedback from foster youth on the care they are receiving from caregivers in foster homes and group homes.

EXISTING LAW:

In 2008, the Florida Department of Children and Families, as a collaborative effort with the Youth Law Center, launched the Quality Parenting

Initiative (QPI). QPI has resulted in the development of innovative tools for foster parents and children in foster care including an exit interview for children and youth in foster care to provide feedback on their caregivers.

Florida's process is broader than AB 1416's approach, however, QPI has reported measurable improvement in outcomes such as, reduced unplanned placement changes, reduced use of group care, reduced numbers of sibling separation, and more successful improvements in reunification.² This bill would launch a similar process in California.

THE SOLUTION:

AB 1416 would require the CA Department of Social Services to develop and implement a caregiver evaluation process which would allow children and youth in foster care to contribute valuable input about the homes they live in and the care they receive. This would help ensure licensing agencies are better informed and able to match children and youth with the most appropriate caregiver. A caregiver evaluation will also assist in identifying issues that need to be addressed through deeper training or clarification of the appropriate standards of care.

SUPPORT:

California Youth Connection (Sponsor)
Alliance for Children's Rights
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
Children Now
Children's Law Center
East Bay Children's Law Offices
John Burton Foundation
Public Counsel

OPPOSITION:

None at this time

¹http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/PIT.aspx

² <http://qipiflorida.cbcs.usf.edu/index.html>

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