



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians

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March 14, 2022

The Honorable Lisa Calderon
Chair, Assembly Committee on Human Services
1021 O Street, Suite 4120
Sacramento, CA

Dear Assembly Member Calderon:

**RE: AB 2579 (BENNETT) AS INTRODUCED
FEBRUARY 18, 2022 — SPONSOR**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is proud to be the SPONSOR of AB 2579 by Assembly Member Bennett, requiring counties, to the extent that funding is available and provided, to implement model practices for intensive family finding and support for children in the child welfare system.

Family Finding is the process of searching for relatives and other people close to the child in foster care (i.e., godparents, family friends, etc.), with the goal of linking children to important people in their life so they can develop a relationship with and live with someone they know. Currently, only 35% of children in foster care are placed with a relative. Research shows that connecting a child or youth in foster care with a family member minimizes placement disruption and improves outcomes for youth. Children and youth who don't feel connected to family or other adults are more likely to experience mental health issues, behavioral issues, homelessness, school disruptions and a lack of self-sufficiency, among other things.

AB 2579 requires counties to implement model practices for intensive family finding and support for foster children as early as possible and throughout their time in foster care. Specifically, the bill requires counties to identify relatives, non-related extended family members, and other adult-like connections for foster children, children detained but not adjudicated, and candidates for foster care. Additionally, as a condition of receiving funds for this purpose, counties must submit a county plan to the Department of Social Services that describes, among other things, the population to be served and the expected outcomes and method for tracking outcomes. This bill improves the lives of children and youth in foster care, minimize placement disruptions, and decrease homelessness among foster youth in California.

For these reasons, CWDA is proud to be the SPONSOR of AB 2579 and respectfully urges your "aye" vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

Cathy Senderling McDonald | Executive Director

cc: Assembly Member Bennett
Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Committee on Human Services
Tam Ma, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
Justin Garrett, California State Association of Counties
County Caucus