



**CWDA**

Advancing Human Services  
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

925 L Street, Suite 350  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
p: 916.443.1749 | f: 916.443.3202  
cwda.org

February 25, 2016

To: The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Chair  
Assembly Committee on Human Services

Honorable Members  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES AUTOMATION**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) respectfully requests your support for our proposed trailer bill language (TBL) related to the new Child Welfare Digital Services system. The Administration is embarking upon a new approach to procurement of this system, an approach that is unprecedented for a system of this size. While we are in agreement with this approach, we believe that it is critical to the success of the new system that county involvement in the process be codified. The CWS automation system is the most important system in the state for county child welfare services staff to ensure the safety and well-being of California's children.

After many years of trying to procure the Child Welfare System – New System (now known as Child Welfare Digital Services) to replace the decades-old Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), the Administration announced in December 2015 that it is taking an innovative and “agile” approach to Child Welfare Services (CWS) automation. Based on our understanding of the planned approach, as described by the state's consultants, we expect it will lead to a shorter, but much more intense, development cycle. CWDA understands how important it is for the state and federal government to implement a different way of procuring large systems that will increase the likelihood of overall success and become a model to be used throughout the United States.

Yet this “agile” approach can only be successful with robust county involvement in the development of the functionality. This will require the inclusion of county CWS staff, as the system's end users, working closely with the developers in all phases of the system lifecycle. This includes development, testing, and enhancement processes for the initial deployment, as well as after statewide deployment. Under the agile methodology, system enhancements occur continuously, even after the system has been deployed statewide, throughout what we have traditionally thought of as the “maintenance and operations” phase.

CWDA's proposed TBL will codify the new “agile” approach to CWS automation. The TBL would require:

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the Office of System Integration (OSI), and CWDA jointly seek resources to enable the necessary level of engagement by the counties in the Child Welfare Digital Services agile development and maintenance process.
- Counties have a voting seat on all governance bodies.
- The existing CWS/CMS operations and functionality be maintained and not decommissioned until the full statewide implementation of the Child Welfare Digital Services system in all counties.
- Continuation of the existing monthly updates to the Legislature and stakeholders on efforts to develop and implement the Child Welfare Digital Services system and regularly scheduled quarterly forums offered to provide project updates to stakeholders and legislative staff.

The CDSS and OSI have acknowledged that this leading edge, innovative approach to procurement of the Child Welfare Digital Services system will require enhanced collaboration with counties in order to be successful. It is important to codify the commitment to this new strategy and the processes that are being implemented to ensure consistent and successful support for the project into the future. A copy of our proposed TBL is attached. We thank you for your consideration of this important language.

Attachment: CWDA Trailer Bill Language-Child Welfare Digital Services

cc: Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker  
Chris Woods, Office of the Assembly Speaker  
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1  
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal  
Will Lightbourne, Department of Social Services  
Robert Smith, Department of Social Services  
John Boule, Office of System Integration  
Michael Wilkening, Health and Human Services Agency  
Matt Paulin, Department of Finance  
Jay Kapoor, Department of Finance  
Mark Newton, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Lourdes Morales, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Farrah McDaid-Ting, California State Association of Counties  
County Caucus