

September 4, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Juvenile
Court
Judges of
California

*a section of the
California Judges
Association*

Re: AB 2906 (Bryan): Foster care payments – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

Assembly Bill 2906 (Bryan) has been unanimously approved by the legislature and will soon reach your desk. This bill will empower California to end the outdated practice of recouping the costs of a child's time in foster care by collecting their survivor's benefits without proper notification. The Juvenile Court Judges of California (JCJC), a section of the California Judges Association, proudly supports this bill and we are writing to respectfully request your signature.

Currently, county placing agencies in California are mandated to screen for federal SSI benefits for eligible youth in their care who are over the age of 16. However, advocates report that these agencies often fail to inform the youth and their attorneys about the application for benefits. Furthermore, once benefits are approved, county placing agencies typically apply to serve as representative payees for the youth and use the funds to reimburse themselves for the costs of the child's care. Although this practice is legal, it has been widely questioned.

AB 2906 seeks to improve transparency by requiring counties to send a written notice of their intent to be appointed as the representative payee to the child's counsel and parents or legal guardians before applying for this role. Additionally, the bill proposes expanding the screening process to include potential eligibility for all federal SSA benefits.

Recognizing the significant challenges faced by children aging out of foster care, AB 2906 aims to allocate a portion of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to support these youths as they transition to independence. This initiative is designed to help these children achieve self-sufficiency in a manner consistent with federal law.

For these reasons and more, JCJC respectfully requests your signature at the appropriate time. For any questions you may have, please contact Cliff Costa at CCosta@CalAdvocates.com or (916) 441-5050.

Sincerely,



Cliff Costa, California Advocates, Inc.
On behalf of Juvenile Court Judges of California, a section of the California Judges Association

cc: Assemblymember Isaac Bryan
Angela Pontes, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor Gavin Newsom

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