

**The Superior Court
of the
State of California**

SAN DIEGO
SUPERIOR COURT

CHAMBERS OF
ANA ESPAÑA
JUDGE OF THE
SAN DIEGO SUPERIOR COURT

*MAILING ADDRESS:
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September 6, 2024

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

RE: Support for AB 2906 (Bryan) – Foster Care payments

Dear Governor Newsom:

As Juvenile Court judicial officers, we are writing in support of many of the approximately 60,000 children currently under the supervision of Juvenile Court judicial officers statewide, urging you to sign Assembly Bill 2906 (Bryan) into law. AB 2906 has been unanimously approved by the legislature.

In implementing this legislation, California will become a leader alongside Oregon and the District of Columbia in righting a tremendous wrong for our children who are dependents of this state; having their social security benefits seized by child welfare agencies, usually without any notice. Many other states are now considering similar legislation as Juvenile Court judges nationwide have become more aware of this issue. California should be on the forefront of this effort.

Child welfare agencies currently have the ability to charge parents for the cost of out-of-home care, but this is not the same as taking money away from children, in the form of social security benefits, to charge them for the placements that were caused by their parents' abuse and/or neglect, and not their own actions.

Nationally, approximately 20% of foster children are entitled to social security benefits. The average disability per youth is \$10,970 per year. States routinely apply for benefits on behalf of foster youth when a youth enters care, and then appoint themselves as the representative payee, using the funds to supplant existing obligations to pay for foster care. States usually act without notifying the youth, their parents, their attorneys, or their representatives. Black, Native American, and LGBTQ children are disproportionately represented in the foster care population, so the impact of these practices significantly impacts these youth. This is money that we know can minimize the number of foster youth aging out of care only to become statistics (experiencing housing, job, and food insecurity, and incarceration). We know these youths and have assisted with them for years in the hope that they will become productive members of our society.

The goal of AB2906 is that a child's own assets in the form of federal benefits should not be used for foster care maintenance, and that children and their representatives must be noticed when benefits are applied for and received by the agency.

AB 2906 makes certain that children in foster care who are entitled to federal benefits receive those benefits, without them being seized by the child welfare agency. It makes it possible for these vulnerable young adults to have a cushion when they leave the child welfare system and makes it more likely that they will have a productive life.

We California Juvenile Court judicial officers urge you to sign AB 2906 into law.

Sincerely,

California Superior Court Juvenile Court Judicial Officers:

Hon. Lupe Garcia, Judge, Alameda County

Hon. Renee C. Day, Judge, Amador County

Hon. Hana Balfour, Judge, El Dorado County

Hon. Mary Dolas, Judge, Fresno County

Hon. Amythest Freeman, Judge, Fresno County

Hon. Susanne M. Rizo, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Inyo County

Hon. Dean T. Stout, Judge (Ret.), Inyo County

Hon. Susan M. Gill, Juvenile Court Assistant Presiding Judge, Kern County

Hon. Christie Canales Norris, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Kern County

Hon. Marianne Gilbert, Judge, Kings County

Hon. Jennifer Giuliani, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Kings County

Hon. Lisa A. Brackelmanns, Commissioner, Los Angeles County

Hon. Annabelle Cortez, Judge, Los Angeles County

Hon. Steven E. Ipson, Judge, Los Angeles County

Hon. Mary E. Kelly, Judge, Los Angeles County

Hon. Lucia J. Murillo, Commissioner, Los Angeles County
Hon. Natalie Nardecchia, Judge, Los Angeles County
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Hon. Gabriela H. Shapiro, Commissioner, Los Angeles County
Hon. Linda L. Sun, Judge, Los Angeles County
Hon. Anthony Trendacosta, Los Angeles County
Hon. Terry T. Truong, Judge, Los Angeles County
Hon. Pamela Villanueva, Los Angeles County
Hon. Stacy Wiese, Judge, Los Angeles County
Hon. David Yaroslavsky, Judge, Los Angeles County
Hon. D. Zeke Zeidler, Judge, Los Angeles County
Hon. Carly Dolan, Juvenile Presiding Judge, Mendocino County
Hon. Wendy J. Dier, Presiding Judge, Modoc County
Hon. Mark Magit, Judge, Mono County
Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse, Judge, Monterey County
Hon. Sam Lavorto, Jr., Supervising Juvenile Justice Judge, Monterey County
Hon. Yvette Durant, Judge, Nevada County
Hon. B. Scott Thomsen, Assistant Presiding Judge, Nevada County
Hon. Isabel Apkarian, Judge, Orange County
Hon. Craig Arthur, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Orange County
Hon. June Jee An, Judge, Orange County
Hon. Maria D. Hernandez, Presiding Judge, Orange County
Hon. Lindsey E. Martinez, Judge, Orange County
Hon. Melissa Begley, Juvenile Court Judge, Placer County
Hon. Douglas Prouty, Presiding Judge and Juvenile Judge, Plumas County
Hon. George A. Acero, Judge, Sacramento County
Hon. Debra D. Lobre, Judge, Sacramento County
Hon. Myrlys Stockdale Coleman, Judge, Sacramento County
Hon. Lynn M. Poncin, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, San Bernardino County
Hon. Mark T. Cumba, Judge, San Diego County
Hon. Ana Espana, Juvenile Division Presiding Judge, San Diego County
Hon. Marian F. Gaston, Judge, San Diego County
Hon. Nadia Keilani, Judge, San Diego County
Hon. Tilisha T. Martin, Juvenile Court Assistant Supervising Judge, San Diego County
Hon. Roger C. Chan, Juvenile Court and Unified Family Court Supervising/Presiding Judge, San Francisco
Hon. Monica F. Wiley, Judge, San Francisco
Hon. Tony J. Agbayani Jr., Juvenile Division Presiding Judge, San Joaquin County
Hon. Carter Holly, Judge, San Joaquin County
Hon. Chinhay C. Cadet, Judge, San Mateo County
Hon. Sharon Cho, Judge, San Mateo County
Hon. Leonard Edwards, Judge (Ret.), Santa Clara County
Hon. Patrick Tondreau, Judge (Ret.), Santa Clara County
Hon. Erika Ziegenhorn, Judge, Santa Cruz County
Hon. Charles H. Ervin, Presiding Judge, Sierra County

Hon. Terrye Davis, Judge, Solano County
Hon. Dora M. Rios, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Solano County
Hon. Daniel Chester, Commissioner, Sonoma County
Hon. Kenneth J. Gness, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Sonoma County
Hon. Linda A. McFadden, Former Presiding Juvenile Judge, Stanislaus County
Hon. Annette E. Rees, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Stanislaus County
Hon. Ruben A. Villalobos, Judge, Stanislaus County
Hon. Matthew C. McGlynn, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, Tehama County
Hon. John Bianco, Judge, Tulare County
Hon. Sylvia J. Hanna, Judge, Tulare County
Hon. Debra L. Givens, Presiding Judge, Yuba County
Hon. Jerilyn Borack, Judge (Ret.), Temporary Assigned Judges Program
Hon. Jane York Punneo, Judge (Ret.), Temporary Assigned Judges Program