



**LEGISLATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

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July 1, 2019

Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Judiciary Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1324 (LEVINE) as amended April 24, 2019 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Jackson:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 1324**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 9, 2019.

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS), if funding is available, to contract with qualified nonprofit legal services organizations to provide legal services to undocumented immigrant dependent children or nonminor dependents of the juvenile court or who have orders for placement through the juvenile court, and requires the child welfare agency to notify the youth's attorney when the youth is an undocumented immigrant.

Congress created the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) in 1990 to provide immigration relief for immigrant children who have experienced maltreatment. Certain undocumented immigrant youth who need the protection of the juvenile court due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or related circumstances may be able to seek lawful permanent residence in the United States through obtaining SIJS. To be eligible, an undocumented youth needs to be under 21 years old and unmarried, and have been

declared a dependent of the juvenile court or been committed to the custody of certain individuals or entities, be unable to reunify with their parent(s) because of maltreatment, and have had it determined that it would not be in their best interest to return to their home country.

While most undocumented children in foster care qualify for immigration relief, that relief is difficult to obtain without legal assistance. There is no mechanism to ensure that undocumented children in foster care receive legal assistance necessary to obtain immigration relief. This bill will address these concerns by requiring notice to minor's counsel when a child is undocumented and in need of SIJS or other immigration relief; and authorize the California Department of Social Services to contract with nonprofit legal services organizations to provide immigration legal services.

For these reasons, DRC supports this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis Child". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" and last name "Child" clearly distinguishable.

Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada Caniglia, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Honorable Marc Levine, California State Assembly
Terry Schanz, Chief of Staff, Office of Assembly Member Levine
Morgan Branch, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Committee