



Foster children: immigration counsel

This bill requires that:

- The State Department of Social Services contract with legal nonprofits to provide legal services to undocumented children in the foster care system
- Additionally, the lawyer of an undocumented child in the foster care system must be notified of their client's undocumented status 72 hours after the placing agency finds out, to ensure the child receives all of the aid to which they are entitled.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Assembly Appropriations Committee estimated that this bill would have a minor fiscal impact.
- Counties are only obligated to notify an undocumented child's lawyer within 72 hours if county funding allows for it.

MAP's Perspective on A.B. 1324

MAP supports this bill.

This issue is especially poignant for young advocates, because, of all of the issues plaguing our nation today, there is nothing more humiliating than America's othering and dehumanizing federal immigration policies that are unjustly afflicting our peers. Children are a large part of the influx of people immigrating to the United States, and are oftentimes forced into navigating the justice system by themselves should they be separated from their families. It is of the utmost importance that children have legal counsel to guide them through this complex and often traumatic process and to stand up for their rights.

Youth Perspective

- Legal protections for undocumented children, specifically for those stripped from their families and forced into foster care, are absolutely necessary to give these children an opportunity to live a normal life.
- As teenagers, we are horrified and disgusted to hear that children our age are being forced to live under the constant pressure of being deported to countries that are virtually foreign to them where they will be put in more danger without any support at all. We can't imagine our siblings, friends, children, loved ones being ripped from their communities with no way to contact their families, left helpless at the hands of domineering and aggressive ICE agents, forced to traverse one of the most complex and failing legal systems, and pushed into America's broken foster care system.

Catholic Perspective

- The Catholic Church believes in supporting members of the society who are the most vulnerable, which includes undocumented, unaccompanied children.
- While aid exists to support them, a lack of basic legal representation means that they often fall through the cracks. As Catholics, we believe that it is the responsibility of those in power to ensure that these vulnerable populations are not overlooked. This bill helps protect undocumented, unaccompanied minors and their access to the aid they deserve.
- The Catholic Church believes that it is the responsibility of the entire community to ensure that every human being, especially those in a vulnerable position, has the opportunity to have the best chance at success, regardless of one's age and legal status. Jesus's example reminds us that we have a duty to work with the most vulnerable, forgotten members of our society.