

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
Fiscal Note**



Fiscal Note On: **SB 237** SLS 26RS 9
 Bill Text Version: **RE-REENGROSSED**
 Opp. Chamb. Action:
 Proposed Amd.:
 Sub. Bill For.:

Date: May 12, 2026 7:55 AM	Author: BARROW
Dept./Agy.: Children and Family Services (DCFS)	Analyst: Patrice Thomas
Subject: Child Welfare - Child Fatalities or Near Fatalities	

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 Provides relative to child welfare. (8/1/26)

Proposed law requires the state child ombudsman to notify, without identifying information, senators/representatives when a child in their district is the subject of an alleged child abuse/neglect investigation; expands notifications, with specific information, that DCFS must report to the state child ombudsman – upon receiving information and after the conclusion of the investigation; and authorizes the ombudsman to have unrestricted remote access to view records on DCFS’s child welfare computer networks/systems. Proposed law adds testimony, with identifying information and explicit details related to physical or sexual abuse of children, in executive session. Proposed law requires DCFS to establish law enforcement liaison positions in each region; designate a chief medical director to manage a public website. Proposed law creates a critical incident review team, with specific members, to review cases of child fatalities/near fatalities. Proposed law requires a forensic interview by a child advocacy center (CAC) within 72 hours, and CAC to notify the multidisciplinary investigative team within 24 hours. Proposed law requires all mandatory reporters to complete annual training provided by DCFS. Proposed law requires reporters to report all suspected child abuse/neglect to DCFS, including in school settings and alleged child perpetrators, and DCFS either investigates or refers to law enforcement. Implementation of proposed law is contingent upon appropriation by the legislature.

EXPENDITURES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Annual Total						
REVENUES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Annual Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

To the extent the Legislature appropriate funds, proposed law may significantly increase expenditures and positions in the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). There is no anticipated material impact on the Office of the Attorney General, the State Child Ombudsman (LA Legislative Auditor), law enforcement agencies, district courts, or district attorneys. **Implementation of proposed law shall be subject to the appropriation of funds by the legislature for this purpose.**

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) - Proposed law requires DCFS to do the following, subject to appropriation: (1) designate a Chief Medical Director to oversee all matters regarding child fatalities and near fatalities; (2) increase notification, by the Chief Medical Director, to the State Child Ombudsman of all child fatalities or near fatalities within three business days, and notifications must include certain information; (3) allow the State Child Ombudsman unrestricted remote access to the department’s child welfare case management systems including certain reports and assessments; (4) management of a public website for substantiated cases of child fatalities or near fatalities by the Chief Medical Director, and to release a public summary report with certain information within 120 days; (5) create new law enforcement liaison positions for each region; (6) require the department to accept all reports of child abuse or neglect to the LA Child Safety Response Center (LCSRC), child welfare hotline; requires child abuse in a school setting to be reported to DCFS; and require the department to accept sex abuse cases in which the alleged perpetrator is a child; (7) require DCFS to notify reporter of alleged abuse/neglect to the specific law enforcement agency where the report was referred; (8) disallow the department from closing cases prior to the review of the case by the multidisciplinary critical incident review team; (9) require the department to “immediately” investigate all reports deemed a high level of risk; and (10) require DCFS to tape record all interviews of a child and/or their parents.

DCFS reports that the proposed law will increase expenditures by \$25,672,918 (\$17,971,043 SGF and \$7,701,876 Federal) and 244 T.O. positions beginning in FY 27, with a 4% increase for market rate adjustments and related benefits for positions in future fiscal years. The department estimates the proposed law will significantly increase calls and intake reports to the CSRC hotline (approximately 55,174 calls/reports), which will result in increased investigations that will require additional positions and increased operating costs, such as IT systems enhancements and upgrades. DCFS estimates the need for 244 T.O. positions with salaries and related benefits (\$23,644,814). Other recurring costs include operating expenses (\$122,000) and other charges (\$292,800), as well as one-time expenditures in FY 27 for 56 new vehicles for new staff (\$1,613,304 = \$28,809 x 56). In subsequent fiscal years, the fiscal note presumes a 4% increase in salaries and related benefits for market rate adjustments as the positions will be classified. See the expenditure table on Page 2.

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION Continued on Page 2

REVENUE EXPLANATION

There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.

Senate Dual Referral Rules
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

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CONTINUED EXPLANATION from page one:

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EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION Continued from Page 1

Also, DCFS estimates an indeterminable increase for IT system enhancements by the Office of Technology Services (OTS) as follows: (1) develop a new page on its website to publish data on substantiated cases of child fatalities and near fatalities; (2) unrestricted remote view access by the State Child Ombudsman; (3) provide information and track outcomes by the multidisciplinary critical incident review team; (4) prevent case closures prior to view by the team; (5) generate notices and produce a print file for notifications to reporters on law enforcement referrals; (6) new intake forms in its child welfare system for alleged child perpetrators in school settings; and (7) digital recordings of interviews.

Department of Children and Family Services

Expenditures

Position Title (Number)	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31	Total
Deputy Medical Director (1)	\$199,375	\$226,200	\$235,248	\$244,658	\$254,444	\$1,159,925
Business Analytics Specialist (1)	\$123,842	\$140,504	\$146,124	\$151,969	\$158,048	\$720,487
Child Welfare Specialist 3 (199)	\$18,825,035	\$21,357,858	\$22,212,172	\$23,100,659	\$24,024,686	\$109,520,411
Child Welfare Specialist Supervisor (28)	\$2,977,513	\$3,378,124	\$3,513,249	\$3,653,779	\$3,799,930	\$17,322,594
Child Welfare Manager 1 (5)	\$636,020	\$721,594	\$750,457	\$780,476	\$811,695	\$3,700,241
Investigative Specialist 3 (9)	\$783,585	\$889,013	\$924,573	\$961,556	\$1,000,018	\$4,558,746
Investigative Specialist Supervisor (1)	\$99,445	\$112,824	\$117,337	\$122,031	\$126,912	\$578,549
Personal Services Sub-Total	\$23,644,814	\$26,826,117	\$27,899,161	\$29,015,128	\$30,175,733	\$137,560,953
Operating Expenses	\$122,000	\$122,000	\$122,000	\$122,000	\$122,000	\$610,000
Other Charges	\$292,800	\$292,800	\$292,800	\$292,800	\$292,800	\$1,464,000
Acquisitions (56 Vehicles)	\$1,613,304	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,613,304
Total	\$25,672,918	\$27,240,917	\$28,313,961	\$29,429,928	\$30,590,533	\$141,248,257
T.O. Positions	244	244	244	244	244	244

Note: The LFO cannot corroborate the increased workload predicted by the department. To the extent the additional workload is less than DCFS anticipates, the additional workload may be absorbable, either wholly or partially, using existing staff and resources, or may be achievable with fewer than 244 positions. To the extent the requirements and procedures could possibly be integrated into existing processes, or by a new IT solution, the need for additional staff may be mitigated.

**Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
Summary of Proposed Law**

	Expenditures	T.O.
<i>Expands Notifications by DCFS to State Child Ombudsman (3 Business Days) and Designate the Chief Medical Director - Notifications to Ombudsman/Public Website</i>		
Deputy Medical Director (1)	\$217,500	1
Business Analytics Specialist (1)	\$135,100	1
<i>Accept Reports of All Child Abuse/Neglect to LA Child Safety Response Center (CSRC) (Estimated at 55,174 Calls/Reports Annually)</i>		
Child Welfare Specialist 3 (4)	\$412,792	4
<i>Increased Investigation from Additional Reports to LCSRC</i>		
Child Welfare Specialist 3 (195)	\$20,123,610	195
Child Welfare Specialist Supervisor (28)	\$3,248,196	28
Child Welfare Manager 1 (5)	\$693,840	5
<i>Establishes Law Enforcement Liaison Positions in Each Region</i>		
Investigative Specialist 3 (9)	\$854,820	9
Investigative Specialist Supervisor (1)	\$108,485	1
<i>Operating Expenses (\$500 per employee)</i>	\$122,000	0
<i>Other Charges (\$1,200 per employee)</i>	\$292,800	0
<i>New Vehicles for New Child Welfare Staff (56 vehicles @ \$28,809)</i>	\$1,613,304	0
Total	\$25,672,918	244

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 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House
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