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EDUCATION FINANCE
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS

AB: 47 Services for Children and Families Separated at the Border

SUMMARY

AB 47 would establish a program to coordinate supportive services and link existing resources to families who were separated at the border by the federal government’s “zero tolerance” policy.

EXISTING LAW/BACKGROUND

The Trump Administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy separated at least 2,654 children from their families at the southern border of the United States. Parents and children were detained separately in crowded facilities with poor quality food, inadequate medical attention, round-the-clock lighting, and little or no information about their family’s whereabouts or legal options.

Many of these separated families have been reunified and now live in California where they are navigating the trauma and psycho-social consequences of the “zero-tolerance” policy.

The Federal government was ordered to provide immediate mental health screenings and treatment to separated families. The services provided have been effective but are time- limited and do not address the range of needs of reunified families.

California lacks a unified approach to coordinated support to provide the basic needs services and physical and mental health

treatment required to stabilize families after this significant harm created as a result of the Federal government’s practice at the border.

Legislative action is necessary to reach out to families, reconnect them, and build a coordinated, culturally sensitive and responsive network of easily accessible supportive services to stabilize families following the trauma of separation.

THIS BILL

This bill directs the Department of Social Services to contract with qualified nonprofits to provide “Multi-tiered and Coordinated Immigration Support Services” to affected families. This approach includes a centralized warm line for service triage and linkage to resources including:

- Culturally relevant physical and behavioral health care
- Legal services
- Food and grocery resources
- Education services
- Housing services
- Individual, group, and family therapy

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