



# *CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE* **California Update**

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## **California Lawmakers Considering Bills That Would Affect Immigrants and Low-Income Families**

*Updated information on the status and content of the bills discussed below is available at [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov). If you have any questions, please call CIWC's Jeannette Zanipatin at 916-448-6762.*

### **HEALTH CARE & ECONOMIC SECURITY**

**AB 772 (Chan) / SB 437 (Escutia): Creation of the California Healthy Kids Program.** These bills would establish the California Healthy Kids program, which would provide health care coverage to all children in California. AB 772 and SB 436 also would make it easier for families to enroll in and keep their children covered by state and federal health insurance programs

**AB 774 (Chan): Hospital Overcharging (two-year bill).** This legislation would provide basic consumer protections for all hospital patients and would protect self-pay patients from being charged more than the amount that insurance programs pay for medical services. AB 774 would require that patients be informed of their rights and financial options and would prevent overcharging of uninsured patients.

**SB 840 (Kuehl): California Health Insurance Reliability Act (CHIRA).** This bill would establish comprehensive health insurance for every California resident. Under this legislation, all Californians would have access to health insurance, including medical, dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage and coverage for hospital stays and emergency room visits.

**AB 379 (Evans): Calworks and Welfare-to-Work Activities.** This legislation makes technical corrections to SB 1104 (Chesbro), which significantly changed the activities that can be counted as work activities under the CalWORKs program. AB 379 seeks to clarify that substance abuse counseling, domestic violence counseling, and

parenting classes are permissible "core" work activities under certain circumstances. The bill would ensure that hard-to-serve families have access to critical services and can also meet the core work activities requirement.

**AB 696 (Chu): Food for Families Act.** This bill makes important reforms to the food stamp program in California. It would eliminate the Statewide Finger Imaging System (SFIS), which requires that all adults in an applicant household provide fingerprint images even if they are not applying for aid. The bill would also modify reporting requirements, provide for a mail-in application process, and require the development of customer service standards.

**AB 1298 (Evans): Self-certification of Assets.** This bill would allow CalWORKs, Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, and food stamp recipients to submit a sworn statement as evidence of their property and assets. AB 1298 also would establish a work group to develop procedures for streamlining eligibility requirements and reducing administrative costs associated with asset certification.

### **LANGUAGE ACCESS/EDUCATION RIGHTS**

**AB 680 (Chan): Parental Involvement for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents.** This legislation would encourage more involvement with their children's education by LEP parents whose children are enrolled in the K-12 public school system. LEP parents often are effectively excluded from written communications between their children's school

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### **THE CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE IS A JOINT PROJECT OF**

**Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California • Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles  
National Immigration Law Center • Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network**

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and their households. Existing law requires school districts to provide translated materials in schools where 15 percent of the students speak a primary language other than English. This bill would require each school district to inform the California Department of Education about the demographics of its population as well as the translation practices of any schools within the district that meet the 15 percent threshold.

**AB 775 (Yee): Limit Child Interpreters in Medical Settings.** This bill would limit the use of children as interpreters in medical settings where the content of the interpretation is for diagnosis and treatment. AB 775 would prohibit the use of children under age 15 as interpreters for medical situations in hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices. This bill also would require hospitals, clinics, and doctors to have procedures in place to facilitate interpretation in medical settings.

**AB 1195 (Coto): Cultural and Linguistic Competency for Doctors.** This bill would require medical doctors and surgeons to fulfill continuing education courses on cultural and linguistic competency. Requiring continuing education in this area would help ensure that doctors and surgeons who provide direct patient care are better equipped to address racial, ethnic, linguistic, and gender-based disparities in medical treatment and diagnosis.

**AB 1452 (Nunez): Consideration of Race, Culture, Gender and Other Factors in College Admissions.** This bill would allow the consideration of race, culture, ethnicity, national origin, and household income along with other relevant factors in undergraduate and graduate admissions when universities or campuses are attempting to obtain a multifaceted and diverse student body. The bill would advance the state legislature's intent that this provision be implemented to the maximum extent permitted by the recent Supreme Court decision in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003), and the California State Constitution.

#### IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

**AB 1338 (Nation): Appointment of Immigration Attorneys for Immigrant Children to Obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).** This bill would require the appointment of immigration attorneys for immigrant children who are wards of the state and are eligible for special immigrant juvenile status. The immigration attorney appointed

to the child would be charged with the duty of applying for SIJS, which allows the dependent child to obtain lawful permanent residence.

**SB 60 (Cedillo): The California Real ID Act of 2005 (Driver's Licenses).** This legislation would establish the California Real ID Act of 2005, which would implement the driver's license provisions of the federal REAL ID Act, signed by President Bush on May 11, 2005. SB 60 would require the state to issue driver's licenses and state identification cards that meet the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security standards under the federal REAL ID Act. This legislation would create different classes of driver's licenses for individuals based on their immigration status, including allowing states to issue marked driver's licenses for immigrants unable to verify their legal status. The Dept. of Homeland Security has not yet issued regulations, and states have three years to implement the federal REAL ID Act. The federal legislation also requires states to capture digital images of documents submitted to the their departments of motor vehicles and to provide other states electronic access to information in their DMV databases. CIWC and other advocates are concerned about the privacy implications of the federal REAL ID Act and the potential harm to U.S. citizens and immigrants.

**AB 432 (Oropeza): Extending the Time to Register to Vote for New U.S. Citizens.** AB 432 would extend the period to register and vote until 8 PM on election day for new citizens. It would allow newly eligible citizens to register and vote at the county elections office or any other location designated by the county elections official at any time beginning on the fourteenth day before an election and ending at 8 PM on election day.

#### WORKERS' RIGHTS

**AB 48 (Leiber): Raising the Minimum Wage for All Working Californians.** AB 48 would raise the state minimum wage to \$7.25 on July 1, 2006, and to \$7.75 on July 1, 2007.

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**NOTE:** ACA 6 (Wyland) and ACA 20 (Haynes), two proposals that would have amended the state constitution to deny all benefits and services to undocumented immigrants and create a California Border Ppolice in the Office of Emergency Services, died in committee on July 5, 2005. The authors may seek to place these proposals on the ballot in 2006.