

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

AUGUST 14, 2018

SUPPORTING AB 366: TEACHER ACCESS TO CHILD ABUSE RECORDS

Children and adolescents spend a large portion of their time in school, which provides teachers and school administrators more access to students than most other professionals. As such, they have a vital role in identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse and neglect.

There are many reasons why educators play such an important role. First, and foremost, they are legally mandated under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to local child protective services. But beyond their legal duties, teachers and school administrators maintain close and consistent contact with children and can offer valuable insight into changing behaviors and concerning patterns. In addition, school personnel are able to advocate for children and help facilitate programs and services that can help strengthen children and families. Children, including those abused or neglected at home, often develop strong bonds and trust with their teacher, who in turn, can provide support and advocacy when needed.

-M O R E-

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Unfortunately, in cases of suspected abuse and neglect, once a teacher or school administrator reports their concerns to the local child welfare agency, they become blind to the ongoing process. At the same time, these educators are still observing changing behaviors and family dynamics but are hampered lacking knowledge of the status of the child's case.

AB 366 introduced by Assemblymen Tom Lackey (R) and Jay Obernolte (R), and Senator Scott Wilk (R), seeks to address this issue by providing access to reports to teachers and school administrators (only if they choose) so that they can follow up and communicate directly with the caseworker to express additional observational concerns, to provide additional details, or to know the status of a case.

I, THEREFORE MOVE, that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors send a five-signature letter to the Governor and the County's State legislative delegation in support of Assembly Bill 366 to help improve communication between teachers and educational administrators and child protective services in the interest of the safety and well-being of children at risk of abuse and neglect.

I, FURTHER MOVE, that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, along with County Counsel, the Department of Children and Family Services, and appropriate law enforcement agencies, to engage with the bill author to further refine and clarify the proposed legislative language so that we ensure the protection of confidential information, identify any necessary training, and include any resulting protocols.

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