



June 6, 2017

The Honorable Ben Hueso
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4940

RE: SB 6 (Hueso): Immigrants: removal proceedings: legal services
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hueso:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 6 (Hueso), the Expanding Due Process Act. This bill would authorize the Department of Social Services to contract with qualified nonprofit legal services organizations and nonprofit agencies to provide legal services to people facing deportation proceedings, and would also establish the California Universal Representation Trust Fund to accept donations to expand the number of people who may be provided legal services.

In California, as in the rest of the United States, people facing deportation proceedings have no right to legal counsel, despite the fact that those with legal representation have a success rate more than five times greater than those who do not. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly believes that all children deserve legal representation in immigration proceedings and has endorsed efforts to do so at the federal level, writing, “The health, well-being, and safety of all children should be prioritized in immigration proceedings. We are aware that it is not uncommon for a child as young as four years of age or younger to represent him- or herself in front of a judge. This is immoral. Given the percentage of children who are granted lawful status when they have legal representation based on the merits of their case, more must be done to ensure that all children have appropriate access to counsel.” Children can also suffer grave trauma when an adult—their parent, sibling, mentor, or friend—is unjustly deported, which happens far more often in the absence of legal counsel.

SB 6 (Hueso) would improve access to legal counsel by allocating \$12 million towards providing counsel for Californians facing deportation, as well as establishing a fund to accept donations to further expand representation. Representation would be prioritized for, among others, those who have a parent, spouse, or child who is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the U.S.; those who have longstanding ties to the U.S. or are eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program supported by the AAP; and those who have a claim for political asylum and are thus likely to face grave danger upon their return. This would help keep families together, children safe, and communities whole.

Pediatricians strongly support SB 6 (Hueso). We thank you for your public service and for your leadership on behalf of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized cursive flourish followed by the initials "MD".

Yasuko Fukuda, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Vice Chair, District IX of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne