

September 3, 2019

Senator Maria Elena Durazo
State Capitol, Room 5066
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 622 (Durazo): Civil detention facilities: state investigation
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Durazo:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation (SB 622) establishing a protocol for the state of California to investigate deaths of people housed or detained for purposes of civil immigration proceedings, either in or shortly after leaving detention facilities in California.

According to American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy, the conditions in which children are detained and the support services that are available to them are of great concern to pediatricians and other advocates for children. In accordance with internationally accepted rights of the child, immigrant and refugee children should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be exposed to conditions that may harm or traumatize them.

The last two years have seen numerous reports of ill treatment and poor living conditions in US detention facilities, including inadequate medical care and a lack of sanitation. Over the last two years, at least 22 people have died in detention facilities. Until December 2018, no children had died in detention facilities for over a decade; since then, at least six children have perished.

Increased oversight by state authority into the circumstances of abuse and ill treatment is necessary. SB 622 helps provide this much-needed oversight by enabling appropriate California authorities to take the necessary steps to investigate deaths, including requiring detention facilities located in California to grant access to state investigators.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California is dedicated to the health and well-being of all children, regardless of immigration status. Pediatricians across the state support SB 622.

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of the children, youth, and families residing in California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership