Use your organization’s stationery, then submit your letter to Governor Newsom by emailing it to leg.unit@gov.ca.gov and please send a signed copy to Julie McCormick, mccormickj@clccal.org.

September XX, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2665 (Carrillo) Child welfare system: racial disparities– SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of *[Name of your organization]*, we write to express our support for Assembly Bill 2665: Equity in Family Services Intervention, which will establish a three-year *blind removal* pilot to address the issue of implicit bias in the child welfare decision-making process. Specifically, AB 2665 will require participating county child welfare agencies to redact demographic information such as names, ethnicity, and income from the documents reviewed when the removal of a child from the child’s family or guardian is being determined.

[Brief description of your organization and why it supports a blind removal pilot to help reduce racial disparities in the child welfare system. If possible, insert a client story illustrating the harms suffered due to the unnecessary removal of a child from a parent/guardian.]

Family separation has devastating effects on those who are impacted—short and long term adverse psychological, emotional, and socioeconomic effects follow the separation of a child from their family or guardian. The decision to remove a child from their family, and everything that is familiar, should only take place with the highest level of scrutiny— and yet there is a growing body of research pointing to the presence of implicit racial bias in the process of investigating child abuse or neglect, substantiating abuse or neglect, and recommending the separation of children from their families.

Black and Native American Children are disproportionately represented within the family intervention system in California. Black children account for 21.8% of California’s foster population, while comprising only 5.4% of the state population overall. Native American children comprise only .4% of the child population but account for 1.3% of the foster care population. Latinx children are also disproportionately represented in 9 California counties. Black and Native American children are overrepresented at every level of contact in the decision making process, and are more likely to end up in the system once reported. Black children specifically are over 3 times more likely to have their case substantiated by a caseworker than white children.

The disparate representation of Black, Native American, and Latinx families in California’s child welfare system reflects a history, and current reality, of the increased surveillance and criminalization that faces communities of color. The California Department of Social Services and individual counties throughout California have sought to solve the problem at different times through the use of cultural competency and implicit bias training, increased funding for case management, and reviews of individual counties’ decision-making and removal systems; and yet the issue of overrepresentation for families of color remains. Establishing a blind removal pilot is an important first step in restoring equity in the process of family intervention in California.

AB 2665 will ensure that families in the piloted counties will not experience the trauma of separation due to bias, while simultaneously collecting useful data on the impact of bias in the system. For these reasons, [Organization] respectfully requests your signature on AB 2665.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

cc: Assemblymember Carrillo