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 2085 (Holden) SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of (ORGANIZATION), I am writing to express our strong support of AB 2085 (Holden), which would address the over-reporting and over surveillance of families of color in our child welfare system. AB 2085 will address concerns with general neglect reporting requirements that require families to be reported to child protective services agencies for reasons related to poverty that do not place children at risk of harm.

Brief description of your organization and why it supports the bill. If applicable, include a client story demonstrating the critical need to amend current mandatory reporting requirements.

California has a vast array of mandated reporting laws that impose criminal and civil penalties on professionals in health, education, and many other fields if they fail to comply. Children of color are significantly more likely to be reported for allegations of abuse and neglect, despite the vast majority of those allegations being unfounded or unsubstantiated. A recent study showed that half of Black children, as well as half of Native American children, experienced an investigation at some point during their childhood, compared to only a quarter of white children.[[1]](#endnote-1) These intrusive and unnecessary investigations result in trauma to children, families, and whole communities, often leading to negative health outcomes. These health outcomes are significantly worse for infants and children who are separated by the child welfare system for issues largely related to economic insecurity.ii

In an effort to reduce trauma to families of color and the burden of an already overwhelmed system, AB 2085 (Holden) clarifies that a parent’s economic disadvantage does not trigger general neglect reporting requirements since issues related to poverty, and not child safety, are more appropriately addressed outside of the child welfare system. This would allow mandated reporters, who are often experts in working with children and families, to utilize their professional judgment on how to best support a family instead of feeling forced to report when another intervention is more appropriate.

Clarifying that general neglect does not include a parent’s economic disadvantage would allow teachers, therapists, and other mandated reporters to offer support to families instead of reporting them. Clarifying that poverty is not neglect could substantially shrink the pipeline of people brought into the child welfare system for reasons unrelated to harming a child, allowing the system to spend more time and resources supporting children who truly are at risk. iii

For these reasons, (ORGANIZATION) respectfully requests you sign AB 2085 into law.

Sincerely,

NAME

ORGANIZATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

cc: Assemblymember Holden

1. i <https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2021/04/child-protective-services-investigates-half-of-all-black-children-in-california/>

ii [Our Systems Meant to Help Are Hurting Black Families (nichq.org)](https://www.nichq.org/insight/our-systems-meant-help-are-hurting-black-families)

iii <https://ccwip.berkeley.edu/childwelfare/reports/Allegation/MTSG/r/ab636/s> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)