



Judicial Council of California

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June 1, 2006

Hon. Rebecca Cohn
Member of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 3160
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 2031 (Cohn), as amended March 29, 2006 - Support

Dear Assembly Member Cohn:

I am pleased to inform you that the Judicial Council is in support of AB 2031, which would require the California Department of Social Services (DSS), in conjunction with other child welfare system stakeholders, to draft guidelines outlining best practices in the use of advanced technology to assist counties in identifying all relatives and nonrelative-extended family members for foster youth. The Judicial Council supports AB 2031 because it will assist the juvenile court in achieving its statutory objective of finding a permanent home for juvenile dependents who cannot be reunified with their parents.

AB 2031 would advance a recently developed practice in the child welfare system referred to as "family finding." Family finding is premised on research that demonstrates that dependent children placed with relative caregivers have better outcomes than other children in the foster care system. It builds on that research by using internet search engines to identify more relatives than previous approaches have allowed. A number of counties in California have initiated family finding projects, and have achieved promising early results. AB 2031 would expand this practice by requiring DSS to develop guidelines for counties to follow in performing family finding. If these projects attain similar success, then courts will be in a better position to ensure that children are able to find safe and permanent placements, and to hold child welfare agencies accountable for locating all potential relative caregivers.

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For these reasons the Judicial Council supports AB 2031.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tracy Kenny".

Tracy Kenny
Attorney

TK/yt

cc: Mr. Eric Csizmar, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Ms. Sue Blake, Director of Legislation, Office of Planning and Research