OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 08 2023

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 273 without my signature.

This bill would establish additional requirements for social workers, probation officers, and juvenile courts when a child or non-minor dependent (NMD) is missing from foster care, including immediate notification requirements, hearing timelines, and due diligence reporting deadlines.

Locating missing children in foster care is a time-sensitive and critical undertaking for the safety and well-being of the child. More can always be done to protect this vulnerable population, which is why I am directing the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to work with county partners to assess existing protocols and identify any needed improvements. With that information, CDSS will work with the author and stakeholders to inform additional guidance, training, or recommend statutory changes to protect all foster youth, especially tribal youth.

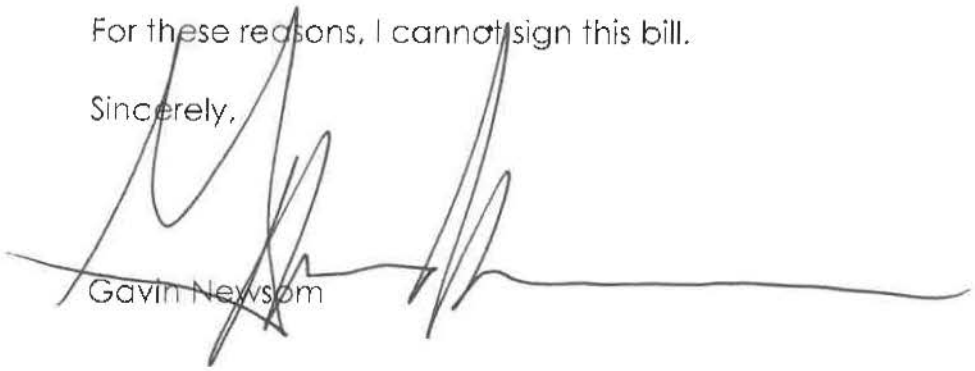
This bill, however, would result in estimated ongoing costs of $10 million General Fund to support the administrative workload for counties, automation costs, and additional workload for the courts, funding not contemplated in the annual budget.

In partnership with the Legislature, we enacted a budget that closed a shortfall of more than $30 billion through balanced solutions that avoided deep program cuts and protected education, health care, climate, public safety, and social service programs that are relied on by millions of Californians. This year, however, the Legislature sent me bills outside of this budget process that, if all enacted, would add nearly $19 billion of unaccounted costs in the budget, of which $11 billion would be ongoing.

With our state facing continuing economic risk and revenue uncertainty, it is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom