



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 12 2025

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am signing Assembly Bill 1261, which requires the state, subject to state funding and with consideration to federal funding, to provide legal counsel to certain noncitizen immigrant youth in California, and requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to allocate the funding and determine how awards of contracts will be allocated.

This population of youth is at greater risk of exploitation and trafficking due to their unique circumstances in the United States, and providing them with support for legal representation furthers their safety and stability in California. In that spirit, and in collaboration with the Legislature, we took action in January of this year to augment funding for civil proceedings, including immigration-related legal services, of which \$6.7 million was allocated to support legal representation for immigrant youth. This was followed by another \$10 million augmentation in the 2025-26 Budget to support immigrant youth, in addition to millions of dollars of ongoing annual funding for legal representation.

The state's recent augmentation and ongoing investments are critical as the Trump Administration repeatedly attempts to cut federal funding for legal services for unaccompanied children, escalate indiscriminate immigration enforcement and continues to take other actions that raise serious concerns about their commitment to the welfare of children. I urge the federal



government to take actions that prioritize the safety, stability, and welfare of these children, including their due process rights.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom