CURRENT LAW
Recent immigration enforcement policies have highlighted the need for adequate resources in detention facilities for undocumented minors who have been separated from their families, as well those undocumented minors that arrive in the United States, unaccompanied. In light of the incidents where children have died or been abused while under the care ICE or U.S. Customs and Border Protection, it’s apparent our current systems are not designed to safely detain children.

All of these children endure traumatic experiences over the course of their journey. They are vulnerable, they need to be protected and their legal rights, ensured. Immigrants remain in federal jurisdiction however, because they are minors, California has unique avenue to ensure these kids get the resources they need-through licensing. Current law already provides for the licensure and regulation of the facilities housing undocumented minors, through the California Community Care Facilities Act.

According to the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement’s data, approximately 4,655 unaccompanied undocumented minors were placed in various styles of housing units in California during the 2018 fiscal year. This legislation will assert already existing authority of operational oversight and mandates to ensure these kids’ mental, emotional and physical health and safety.

THIS BILL
AB 163 shall:

1. Create a facilities liaison position in the immigration services unit that assist in connecting state licensed group homes, foster family agencies, and resource families serving undocumented immigrant youth with supports and services including but not limited to, legal services, mental health services assessment services, and public benefits.

2. Assist in arranging meetings for undocumented immigrant minor with qualified organizations that will provide legal services.

3. The facilities liaison shall work with and develop guidance for the county child welfare agencies and county human services agencies to identify supports and services and connect licensees to those supports and services.

4. The facilities liaison shall regularly communicate with the community care licensing division about complaints or licensing concerns to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the undocumented immigrant youth.

We can’t undo the trauma these children have already endured but together we can work within our current regulatory system to make sure these children have access to resources they need and deserve.

STATUS
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