

Bill requiring incarcerated parents to be housed close to their children advances

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Today Assemblymember Matt Haney's (D-San Francisco) AB 1226 passed out of the Senate Public Safety Committee with bipartisan support. It will now head to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

This bill requires the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to respect the rights of minor children to remain in contact with their incarcerated parents.

AB 1226 requires CDCR to place an incarcerated parent, legal guardian, or caregiver of a minor child in the correctional facility closest to that child's home. The bill also allows already incarcerated parents to request a transfer to a prison close to their child's home.

In a large state like California, there are thousands of incarcerated parents who are placed more than 500 miles from their children. Incarcerated mothers, in particular, struggle to maintain contact with their children.

More than half of incarcerated mothers do not receive any visits from their children while they are in prison.

Research shows that children with incarcerated mothers particularly struggle with behavioral health issues, which underscores the need for children to maintain contact with their incarcerated parents, especially mothers.

In 2019, CDCR released information that only 25% of incarcerated people in California state prisons are placed in institutions less than 100 miles from home.

The long distances place a burden on families who do not have the financial means or the time to travel across the state for family visits. Visitation falls off significantly the farther from home a person is incarcerated. 50% of people placed less than 50 miles away from home receive frequent family visitation, but only 15% of people placed 500 miles away receive visitors.