PUT ON LETTERHEAD, PERSONALIZE, SIGN, AND UPLOAD TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE PORTAL - INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Go to: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

2. Create an account if you do not already have one

3. Click on “Submit a Letter”

4. Select a bill: SB 452

5. Select committee: Judiciary

6. Select Stance: Support; Subject: **SB 452 (Weber Pierson)**

7. Upload your letter, review, and submit

Date

The Honorable Thomas Umberg, Chair

Senate Judiciary Committee

1021 O Street, Room 6710

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 452 (Weber Pierson) Child Welfare: Prevention Legal Services –SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Umberg:

On behalf of *Organization Name,* I write in support of SB 452 (Weber Pierson), which would create the Family Advocacy Pilot Program, a program that would support prevention legal services designed to prevent the filing of a petition in a juvenile court or stabilize a family that is at risk of receiving child welfare services.

*Add information about your organization and connection to this issue.*

The goal of prevention legal services (also often referred to as pre-petition representation) is to prevent the unnecessary and traumatic separation of children from their families, particularly when poverty-related issues are conflated with neglect. Far too many families lack adequate income, housing, or education because of systemic inequities that have left opportunities scarce in certain communities, particularly communities of color. Providing legal representation before a dependency petition is filed is one way to make sure families have the support and resources they need to keep their children safely with them.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Nationwide, prevention legal service programs such as the one proposed by SB 452 have shown great promise in helping to address inequities and strengthen families. Early legal services can be the difference in keeping a family out of the child welfare system by stopping an eviction, or accessing government benefits, or securing a needed family law order. A family’s income level should not determine whether they have access to an attorney who can help them prevent the unnecessary and traumatic separation of children from their families.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 542 (Weber Pierson) and respectfully request your support for the bill.

Sincerely,

*Insert signature*

*Name*

*Organization*

1. <https://www.casey.org/pre-petition-legal-advocacy/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)