



## SB 608 – Kids’ Plates 2.0

### IN BRIEF

SB 608 will revamp the Kids’ Plates Specialty Vehicle Licensing funding program to increase the amount of funding captured through the sale and renewal of these special license plates and equitably distribute the funds across all 58 counties. These changes will further support the Child and Health Safety Fund and improve health outcomes for California’s kids.

### BACKGROUND

The Kids’ Plates specialty vehicle license program (Speier, 1992, AB 3087) contributes funding to child abuse prevention, childcare safety and health, and childhood injury prevention programs.<sup>1</sup> The Kids’ Plates program collects funding through sale and renewal fees of “Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids” specialty license plates that have a heart shape, a star, a handprint, or a plus-sign.

California law requires that 90% of Kids’ Plates revenue be contributed to the Child Health and Safety Fund. This funding is distributed to departments, county commissions, local councils, and organizations focused on childhood unintentional injury prevention, childcare recruitment, and education, and child abuse prevention. The childcare licensing and oversight unit in the Department of Social Services was also established through the Child Health and Safety Fund.

Since enacted, over \$60 million has been raised in plate sales and renewals for child safety programs, and approximately \$4.5 million is deposited annually into the Child Health and Safety Fund.

### THE PROBLEM

The initial issuance and renewal fees for Kids’ Plates have not been changed since the program’s creation, despite changes in costs to programs supported by the Child Health and Safety Fund.

Further, while the Kids’ Plates funding was integral in establishing the child care licensing and oversight unit in the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 1992 by requiring 50% of Kids Plates funds be available to the DSS for child care licensing administrative duties, this structure is now fully supported with millions of dollars of several other licensing fees, grants, and state and federal dollars.

Child safety, childcare, and unintentional injury concerns have shifted since the Kids’ Plates creation over thirty years ago. The identified categories of unintentional injuries in the Kids’ Plates statute need updating to include the current

causes of unintentional injury. Mental health, for example, is not currently covered by Kids Plate funding but impacts 65% percent of children with unintentional injuries.<sup>2</sup>

### THE SOLUTION

Restructuring Kids’ Plates funding would allow for an equitable distribution to support California children in a more strategic manner, allocating this funding directly to the counties, commissions, and agencies actively working in these programs.

SB 608 will increase Kids’ Plates funding for the initial issuance and renewal of the “Have a Heart, Be a Star, Help Our Kids” license plates and distribute the funding in an equitable manner across the whole state to better support California’s children.

SB 608 will also update the list of unintentional childhood injuries to be supported in prevention programs, including those associated with mental health, cardiac arrest, and family disaster planning.

Finally, this bill will implement a formula to support existing local child abuse prevention programs, childhood injury prevention, and childcare safety and health across all 58 counties. Specifically, SB 608 will appropriate the Kids’ Plates funding accordingly:

- 25% to the 58 county child abuse trust funds for strategic planning and training.
- 50% to the 58 local childcare and development planning councils to be used in local childcare recruitment and training, and to support state level childcare health and safety education and training.
- 20% to the 58 First 5 county commissions to support childhood unintentional injury prevention programs.
- 5% to the State Department of Public Health in support of the department’s injury prevention branch addressing childhood injury prevention.

### SUPPORT

California Coalition for Children’s Safety and Health (Sponsor)  
Children’s Advocacy Institute University of San Diego School of Law (Sponsor)  
Former Congresswoman Jackie Speier

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<sup>1</sup>[California Kids’ Plates Program](#), CDPH

<sup>2</sup>[Mental Health Needs for Children and Adolescents Following Injury](#), Nationwide Children’s Hospital, 2019