

Assembly Bill No. 899

CHAPTER 267

An act to add Section 831 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to juveniles.

[Approved by Governor September 4, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State September 4, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 899, Levine. Juveniles: confidentiality of records.

Existing law requires the case file of a dependent child or ward of the juvenile court to be kept confidential, except as specified. Existing law authorizes only certain persons to inspect the case file, including, among others, the attorneys for the parties, judges, referees, other hearing officers, and law enforcement officers who are participating in proceedings involving the dependent child or ward.

This bill would provide that nothing in these provisions authorizes the disclosure of juvenile information to federal officials absent a court order upon filing a petition, as specified. The bill also would provide that nothing in these provisions authorizes the dissemination of juvenile information to, or by, federal officials absent a court order upon filing a petition, as specified. This bill would also provide that nothing in these provisions authorizes the attachment of juvenile information to other documents given to, or provided by, federal officials absent prior approval of the presiding judge of the juvenile court. This bill would specify that "juvenile information" includes the juvenile case file and information related to the juvenile, as specified.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature that juvenile records remain confidential in order to serve the compelling interest of avoiding stigma and promoting rehabilitation for juveniles. It is not the intent of the Legislature to attempt to resist federal officials.

SEC. 2. Section 831 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

831. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this section to clarify that juvenile court records should remain confidential regardless of the juvenile's immigration status. Confidentiality is integral to the operation of the juvenile justice system in order to avoid stigma and promote rehabilitation for all youth, regardless of immigration status.

(b) Nothing in this article authorizes the disclosure of juvenile information to federal officials absent a court order of the judge of the juvenile court

upon filing a petition as provided by subparagraph (P) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 827.

(c) Nothing in this article authorizes the dissemination of juvenile information to, or by, federal officials absent a court order of the judge of the juvenile court upon filing a petition as provided by subparagraph (P) of paragraph (1) and paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 827.

(d) Nothing in this article authorizes the attachment of juvenile information to any other documents given to, or provided by, federal officials absent prior approval of the presiding judge of the juvenile court as provided by paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 827.

(e) For purposes of this section, “juvenile information” includes the “juvenile case file,” as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 827, and information related to the juvenile, including, but not limited to, name, date or place of birth, and the immigration status of the juvenile that is obtained or created independent of, or in connection with, juvenile court proceedings about the juvenile and maintained by any government agency, including, but not limited to, a court, probation office, child welfare agency, or law enforcement agency.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing any disclosure that would otherwise violate this article.

(g) The Legislature finds and declares that this section is declaratory of existing law.