The Quorum
September 2023: Updates from Sacramento

With the 2023 portion of the legislative session coming to a close, now is a great time for us to get updated on what is happening with key policies that we are tracking across the state. The bills which have passed both the Assembly and the Senate, are now on their way to Governor Newsom, where they will need to be signed into law by October 14th.

Because California works within a two-year legislative session, many bills that did not pass this year will become “two-year bills”. This means that they will have a second chance to be passed into law. Two-year bills must pass their house of origin (assembly or senate) by January 31st of 2024, or else they are officially “dead” bills. For those bills which have already passed out of their house of origin (i.e. a senate bill which is now in the assembly, or vice versa), they will generally follow along the same timeline and deadlines as any other regular bill.

As a reminder, the chapter has set 3 main advocacy priorities for this legislative session: (1) Behavioral and Mental Health, (2) Child poverty (and affiliated programs), (3) Childcare/Early Childhood Education. Below is an update on some of the key bills we have been tracking as a chapter:

**Behavioral and Mental Health**

**AB 665: Minor Consent to Mental Health Services**

This bill would allow children 12 years and older to consent for mental health services on their own (not including use of psychotropic medications). Current law already allows children with private insurance to consent on their own, but has more restrictions for children on Medi-Cal. This bill will eliminate those additional restrictions for children on Medi-Cal.

*Status:* Passed both the Assembly and the Senate. Is awaiting signature from the Governor.

**AB 456: Campus Mental Health Hotlines**

This bill would improve the mental health hotline system for state-funded college/university systems.

*Status:* Did not pass out of assembly. Is a 2-year bill. It has until January 31st, 2024 to pass the assembly or it becomes inactive/“dead”.
SB 291: Pupil Rights: Recess

This bill would prohibit schools from taking recess from students as a punitive measure unless there is a safety concern.

Status: As of the time this article is being written, this bill has passed out of the Senate, and has passed the Assembly education committee. It has been stuck in the Assembly appropriations committee and is likely to become a “two-year bill”.

Child Poverty

AB 85: Social Determinants of Health Screening

This bill would require health plans to provide reimbursement for physicians to complete social determinants of health screening.

Status: As of the time this article is being written, this bill has passed out of the Assembly, and has passed out of the Senate Appropriations committee. It is awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor to see if it will make it to the Governor.

SB 348: Pupil Meals

This bill would improve the nutritional content for meals being provided by schools.

Status: Passed both the Assembly and the Senate. Is awaiting signature from the Governor.

Early Childhood Education

AB 596 and SB 380: Early Learning and Care Rate Reform

These bills are companion bills, which were both introduced in their respective houses. They would equitably increase funding for childcare workers and call for a pause in families having to pay fees for subsidized childcare while a sliding scale fee system is being put in place.

Status: Both of these bills passed out of their houses of origin but have as of now been placed on hold. They are now two-year bills. Because they have already passed out of their houses of origin, they will have until August 31st 2024 to make it out of the legislature and to the Governor’s desk for signature.
The Quorum is a monthly policy spotlight. For any inquiries, please email Chapter 2 legislative and policy analyst, Kamaal Jones, at KamaalJones.AAP@gmail.com

Past Issues:

August (Legislative recess)
July 2023: The Climate Crisis is Heating Up
June 2023: Bill Updates
May 2023: What the California Budget Revise Means for Kids
April 2023: Advocacy Conference and The Unwinding
March 2023: Protecting Youth from Fentanyl
February 2023: The Childcare Crisis
January 2023: Advocacy Survey Results
November 2022: Status Post Midterms
October 2022: Vote Kids!
September 2022: Updates from Sacramento
August 2022: Nearing the End of the 2021-2022 Legislative Session
July 2022: Federal Gun Safety Legislation
June 2022: The Formula Shortage Crisis
May 2022: An Update on California Pediatric Behavioral Health Policy Legislation and Initiatives
April 2022: The Expanded Child Tax Credit
March 2022: Threats to the Health of Transgender Youth
February 2022: The CA Legislative Vaccine Work Group
January 2022: The Legislature is Back in Session
December 2021: An Update on School Based Vaccine Mandates
November 2021: The Pediatric Mental Health Crisis

References:
7. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB596