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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

June 16, 2026

The Honorable Stan Ellis
32nd District, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5350
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tom Lackey
34th District, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5340
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jasmeet Bains
35th District, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5730
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1143 (Caballero), Coordinating child abuse investigations and services – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Delegates,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our support for SB 1143 (Caballero), which makes statutory changes to Penal Code 11166.4 to allow Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) to release recordings of child forensic interviews to child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect, upon request.

California established the framework for coordinated child abuse investigations through AB 2741 (2020), which authorized counties to utilize CACs to coordinate multidisciplinary responses to cases involving child abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment. These centers bring together professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical providers, mental health professionals, and victim advocates to ensure investigations are conducted in a trauma-informed, child-focused environment. Later, legislation, including AB 477 (2021) and SB 603 (2023), further strengthened the role of CACs and established detailed protocols governing the release and protection of forensic interview recordings.

Under existing law, child welfare agencies are not explicitly listed among the entities authorized to receive recordings of child forensic interviews. In practice, this omission means that county social workers responsible for investigating allegations of abuse or neglect may have access only to written

summaries or notes rather than the recordings themselves. In Kern County, our social workers investigating abuse allegations often rely on secondary summaries rather than the actual recordings. This limitation can reduce investigators' ability to fully assess a child's statements, including tone, emotional cues, and other non-verbal indicators that are often critical to understanding the context of abuse.

This statutory gap directly affects the effectiveness of child welfare investigations and the ability of agencies to protect children. Social workers play a central role in assessing risk, determining whether intervention is necessary, and coordinating services for affected families. Without direct access to recorded interviews, investigators lack important context that informs safety decisions or case outcomes. In some cases, this constraint can prolong investigations or require additional follow-up interviews, potentially increasing trauma for the child involved.

SB 1143 would address this issue by explicitly allowing CACs or other designated custodians to release forensic interview recordings to child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect. The bill preserves all existing confidentiality safeguards, including protective order requirements and prohibitions against public release or duplication.

By clarifying that child welfare agencies can access these recordings, SB 1143 advances the collaborative, multidisciplinary approach California has built to respond to child abuse. This bill ensures that all appropriate investigative partners have the tools necessary to fully evaluate allegations while maintaining strong privacy protections for child victims. This change will support more informed investigations, improve coordination among agencies, and reduce the likelihood that children must repeat traumatic experiences during the investigative process.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors supports this measure and respectfully urges you to vote **YES on SB 1143** when it comes to the Assembly floor.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Kern County Department of Human Services
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange