

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the proposed Child Welfare Services (CWS) budget reductions. I have served in Yolo County Child Welfare Services for more than 21 years, the last eight as a Social Worker Supervisor II in Emergency Response. I was also a Social Worker Practitioner (SWP) during the 2008–2009 recession, when our department experienced the reduction of certain support positions but gained others, including additional SWPs, to ensure mandated work could be completed. While those times were challenging, the reductions outlined in the current proposal are far more severe and will make it impossible to meet federally mandated requirements or ensure child safety. These risks are not speculative—they are inevitable if staffing is reduced as proposed.

I appreciated Supervisor Mary Vixie's questions and concerns regarding Child Welfare Services during the April 28, 2026 meeting, including the suggestion that the Board reevaluate the proposed eliminations to preserve child safety. I was then disheartened to hear expressions of relief regarding the proposal during the May 5, 2026 meeting. CWS operates under strict federal and state mandates, including emergency response timelines, safety assessments, monthly contacts, documentation standards, and court reporting. These requirements cannot be delayed, reduced, or modified to accommodate a smaller workforce.

Although caseloads have decreased since their peak in 2018, the Agency has consistently determined that all vacant SWP positions should be filled as evident by a continuous position posting and even expanded support staffing by adding six Social Service Assistant (SSA) positions as recently as 2024–2025. At the time this proposal was drafted, the eight SWP vacancies were not identified as excess positions; they were simply open, making them easier to eliminate on paper. While some restructuring and eliminations within CWS may be reasonable, the scale of reductions proposed is extreme and will be detrimental to both the Agency and the community.

The proposal to eliminate 14 support staff positions—10 of which were filled at the time—will have profound, system-wide consequences. Support staff perform critical, mandated functions, including processing documentation, managing records, Indian Child Welfare inquiries, filing court reports, supervising visits, case reviews and more. Their work enables social workers and supervisors to focus on child safety and mandated casework. Eliminating these positions will force administrative duties and extensive court-ordered visit supervision back onto social workers. This strain will be exacerbated by the proposed reduction of vendor visitation services. Failure to meet federal mandates carries significant consequences, including, delayed permanency, potential sanctions and the loss of federal funding for cases that fall out of compliance. Without a realistic plan to absorb or reassign this work, it will be impossible to maintain required standards. While SWPs are capable of completing the tasks, it is simply not possible for them to perform the full workload of 22 eliminated positions. They are not machines.

During the May 5, 2026 meeting, CWS Director Marisa Green stated that any staffing losses beyond the proposal would “break” the Agency. Since that meeting, three additional Social Worker Practitioners have resigned, with more expected. CWS has experienced unusually high turnover since 2018. Expecting remaining SWPs to absorb the work of eight eliminated SWPs—plus the duties of 14 support staff—will push staff to a breaking point, drive more resignations, and further harm the Agency’s stability. Even if some positions are later approved to be backfilled, the lengthy

administrative process, hiring delays, and extensive training required will compound the impact. Given anticipated budget cuts over the next three to five years, ongoing burnout and turnover would leave the Agency in a constant state of crisis, with direct consequences for vulnerable children and families.

Recent organizational changes already demonstrate the dangers of excessive workload. In the past 10 months, leadership-directed restructuring required Emergency Response units to absorb work previously assigned to five Court Unit staff. As a result, 43 percent of the ER and former Court Unit workforce (10 SWPs) resigned. Since release of the current proposal, ER has also lost both of our assigned SSAs. These losses have led to missed mandates, worker burnout, court and community frustration, delayed ICWA inquiries, missed visits, limited supervisory availability as a result of supervisors required to complete SWP duties, and delays in placing children with relatives. With permanent loss of the SSA positions and the vacant SWP positions, these failures will only grow.

Child welfare work does not stop when budgets are cut. Emergencies will continue. Families will continue to need support. Children will continue to require protection. The proposed staffing reductions would leave us unable to meet statutory requirements and would jeopardize the safety and well-being of the very children we are mandated to protect. Our community's most vulnerable should not bear the consequences of the County's past poor fiscal decisions.

I strongly urge the Board to reconsider these reductions and adopt a budget that preserves adequate staffing—both frontline and support positions—to meet federal mandates, maintain compliance, and sustain a safe and functional child welfare system.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Breanna Kraft*

Breanna Kraft

Social Worker Supervisor II

Health and Human Services Agency: Child Welfare