



ASSEMBLYMEMBER — DISTRICT 26

Patrick Ahrens

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2025

Contact: Eddie Kirby

(916) 319-2026

Eddie.Kirby@asm.ca.gov

**Governor Newsom Signs Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens’
Legislation AB 461 Repealing California Penal Code Misdemeanor
Charge for Parents of Truant Students**

“Families and Kids Need Support, Not Criminal Charges and Fines”

SACRAMENTO, CA — Governor Gavin Newsom today announced signing Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens’ [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 461](#) to repeal Section 270.1 of the California Penal Code and decriminalize truancy. Until this bill becomes law, Section 270.1 makes a parent or guardian of a student who is chronically truant guilty of a misdemeanor which includes punishment with a fine of up to \$2,000 and imprisonment for up to one year.

Assemblymember Ahrens shared, *“Thank you to Governor Newsom for signing my bill to repeal this failed policy of criminalizing struggling California families for their children missing school; families and kids need support, not criminal charges and fines, to improve school attendance. Fining or imprisoning parents did nothing to get kids the education and support they need.”*

AB 461 was sponsored by End Child Poverty California/GRACE, SEIU California, and the Western Center on Law and Poverty, and has been supported by dozens of justice and parent organizations including the California State PTA.

SEIU California released the following statement from David Green, President of SEIU Local 721 and Executive Board Member of SEIU California, *“No parent wants their child to miss out on critical learning opportunities in school; repeated unexcused absences are a sign families may be in need of support to secure a doctor’s note or to address bullying at school. SEIU members serving families who count on the state’s social safety know that a little help can be transformative for families and that the first step toward creating a supportive environment for families struggling with school attendance is decriminalizing truancy. We thank Assemblymember Ahrens for authoring AB 461 and ensuring families can access support rather than be subject to jail and fines. We applaud Governor Newsom for signing this bill into law and know that it will pave the way for our workforce to better serve families and to ensure they get the help they need.”*

Yesenia Jimenez, Senior Policy Associate at End Child Poverty CA powered by GRACE said, *“As a child, I grew up with an incarcerated parent and saw firsthand how the carceral system tore my family apart, deepening our struggle with poverty. AB 461 (Ahrens) is a step toward breaking that cycle. I’m deeply grateful the Governor has signed this bill — in honor of all the children who deserve support, not trauma.”*

“The Western Center on Law & Poverty is pleased the Governor signed AB 461 (Ahrens) which removes criminal penalties for truancy. This outdated and ineffective strategy criminalizes families rather than offering support. This bill will assist families who may be facing challenges such as fear of deportation, poverty, and mental health challenges,” stated Rebecca Gonzales, Policy Advocate with the Western Center.

AB 461 becomes law on January 1, 2026, and repeals Section 270.1 of the California Penal Code.

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[Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens](#) represents the Silicon Valley in the California State Assembly for District 26. He serves on the Assembly Committees on Budget, Business and Professions, Communications and Conveyance, Rules, Transportation, and Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Human Services. Assemblymember Ahrens is the Co-Chair of the California Legislative Technology & Innovation Caucus, and a member of the California Legislative Jewish and Bay Area Caucuses.