



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians



March 2, 2020

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Chair, Assembly Committee on Human Services
State Capitol Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1979 (Friedman) Achieving the Vision of Extended Foster Care - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Reyes:

The below signed organizations are pleased to sponsor AB 1979 (Friedman), which seeks to ensure that the Extended Foster Youth Program (EFC) has sufficient housing-related supports to ensure that all eligible youth who opt to participate can take full advantage of the transition to independence opportunities offered by the program and live in a safe and stable environment.

A Decade of Experience: Achieving the Vision of Extended Foster Care

Several of the groups noted below were among the original co-sponsors of the legislation that extended foster care for youth up to age until 21 and all of the groups have worked tirelessly over the last decade to implement the program across California, working directly with thousands of youth, providers and county staff.

We've seen firsthand what Chapin Hall's comprehensive CalYOUTH study, which measured the impact of extended foster care, confirms: the EFC Program has shown numerous benefits for participating young adults, including improvements in education, employment, housing, and social support, as well as reductions in pregnancy and criminal justice system involvement. However, we have also observed the lack of capacity and supports within the EFC program which has led to hundreds of young people who should be supported through the program experiencing homelessness and housing instability. The CalYOUTH study reveals that over 35 percent of youth reported they experienced homelessness while actively enrolled in extended foster care.

Investing in Housing Availability and Supports to Achieve Placement Stability

To achieve the vision of EFC, it is critical to invest in increased housing availability and supports to ensure that all of the young people who want to participate in the EFC program can take full advantage of the program.

AB 1979 makes these investments and increases the housing options available to youth participating in the extended foster care program and reduces their risk of falling into homelessness by:

- Developing capacity to meet the immediate housing needs of young adults who are re-entering extended foster care or who are moving to a new placement;
- Streamlining the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) approval process;
- Promoting placement stability by requiring counties to "hold" placements for up to 14 days if the youth has provided notice of intent to return within 14 days or the program has reason to believe the youth will be returning to stabilize placements for youth, and

- Requiring counties, in conducting a regular evaluation of their placement resources and programs to consider youth in EFC placed in out-of-home care, including the county's ability to meet emergency housing needs of those youth.

For these reasons, we are pleased to sponsor AB 1979 and respectfully request your AYE vote in committee.

If you have questions regarding our position on this measure, please contact Cathy Senderling-McDonald, CWDA, at csend@cwda.org or (916) 443-1749 or Kristin Power, Alliance for Children's Rights, at k.power@kids-alliance.org or (916) 930-0275 ext. 204.

Sincerely,




Kristin Power, Government Relations Director
Alliance for Children's Rights



Julie McCormick, Policy Associate
Children's Law Center of California



Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Deputy Executive Director
County Welfare Directors Association of California



Jane Schroeder, Director of Public Policy
First Place for Youth



Susanna Kniffen, Senior Director, Child Welfare
Children Now



Jackie Wong, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy
GRACE

cc: Members and Staff, Assembly Committee on Human Services
Assemblymember Friedman
Daphne Hunt, Health and Human Services Agency
Robert Smith, Department of Social Services
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Caucus