

2022

State Legislative Agenda



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth

✓ SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

JBAY supports legislation to expand access to safe, affordable housing for youth aging out of foster care in California. Specifically, JBAY supports a \$25.3 million expansion of the state's Transitional Housing Program, bringing the program to a total of \$33.3 million annually. The expansion includes \$10.3 million to expand the length of time a youth can participate in the program and \$15 million to provide housing to the 473 youth currently on the program's waiting list. Additionally, JBAY supports increasing utilization of federal housing choice vouchers for foster youth by investing an additional \$8.7 million in the state's Housing Navigators Program and modifying the eligibility to align with the specialized foster youth vouchers.

✓ COLLEGE RETENTION AND DEGREE COMPLETION

Foster youth in California are enrolling in college at record levels but are not making corresponding gains in retention and degree completion. JBAY supports legislation to expand access to college retention services for foster youth by doubling California's investment in the NextUp program from \$20 to \$40 million. JBAY also supports creating a parallel network of support for foster youth at each of the nine University of California campuses and 22 campuses of the California State University System funded with \$18 million in state funds.

✓ ECONOMIC SECURITY

California's earned income tax program is an effective strategy to direct financial assistance to those who need it most, including youth in foster care. JBAY supports legislation to build on this important program by establishing a \$1,000 refundable tax credit for former

foster youth. Eligible youth would be between the ages 18 and 26 and would have been in foster care on or after age 13. Approximately 55,000 would be eligible and the estimated cost would be \$20.3 million annually.

✓ LONG TERM HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR YOUTH

California has made recent progress addressing youth homelessness, requiring two of the state's largest programs to dedicate funding specifically for youth. These programs are the two-year, \$2.75 billion Homekey Program and the two-year \$2 billion Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program. JBAY supports legislation that would establish an ongoing investment in HHAP, which would include the current 10% youth set-aside.

✓ SUPPORTING CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESS K to 12 STUDENTS

Currently in California, 246,350 K to 12 students "lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The challenges facing unhoused students have been amplified by the pandemic. JBAY supports legislation that would invest \$200 million of the state's projected \$46 billion budget surplus in the needs of California's homeless K to 12 students. This legislation would require site-based liaisons at every school, improve access to early childhood education, improve data access to better serve homeless students, ensure homeless youth receive assistance applying for college financial aid and provide direct assistance to homeless K to 12 students. It would also reform the Local Control Funding Formula to increase support for unaccompanied homeless youth.

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