



February 13, 2024



The Honorable Gavin Newsom
California State Governor
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: Proposed Elimination of Housing Supports for Foster Youth



Dear Governor Newsom,



The undersigned coalition of organizations, public agencies, and young adults are writing to express concern about two budget cuts included in your Administration's proposed 2024-25 budget that will increase homelessness among foster youth. These include \$18.8 million (General Fund, ongoing) for the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) Supplement and \$13.7 million (General Fund, ongoing) for the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program.



The SILP Supplement was included in the FY 23-24 budget. It will provide a supplementary payment to foster youth placed in a SILP, based on the cost of housing in the county where they live. These young people currently receive \$1,206 monthly for all living expenses: rent, food, utilities, clothing, transportation and more. Given this low rate and escalating housing costs, 1 in 5 current foster youth in California have at least one episode of homelessness between ages 18 and 21.



The Legislature and your Administration adopted the SILP Supplement for several reasons. First, it recognized the unique responsibility that California has to youth in foster care, who were placed into foster care through no fault of their own. The Legislature and Administration also understood that experiencing homelessness as a youth or young adult increases the likelihood of being chronically homeless as an adult. Finally, the policy was adopted because it achieves the important goal of reducing homelessness among youth in foster care by leveraging federal funding.



The undersigned organizations support the foster care rate reforms underway. However, their focus is on ensuring foster children and youth in family settings receive the correct level of care, such as mental health counseling. They do not address the housing affordability crisis experienced uniquely by young people who live in a SILP and they do not address the needs of young adults in foster care living independently.





The second proposed reduction of concern is the elimination of the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, which pays for supportive services for 1,300 foster youth who have a federal housing voucher specifically for former foster youth. These vouchers are known as Family Unification Program (FUP) and Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers.

Prior to the creation and expansion of the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, these federal vouchers were underutilized in California because there was not a source of public funding to provide the required supportive services. Since the creation and expansion of the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, the number of vouchers has increased 54% in California, bringing \$22 million in federal investment to California annually. The effectiveness of this expansion is one key reason why homelessness among transition-age youth has decreased 16% between 2020 and 2023. If this program is eliminated, this effective state/federal partnership will come to a halt and put 1,300 youth at risk of homelessness.

We appreciate the complexity of the state budget and the need to responsibly steward scarce public resources. However, we request that your Administration sustain its long-standing commitment to children and youth in foster care by revisiting these decisions and maintaining these important state investments.

Thank you for all you have done for the children and youth of California. We look forward to ongoing dialogue about these important issues in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- Abode Services
- Alameda County Office of Education
- Aldea
- All Saints Church Foster Care Project
- Alliance for Children's Rights
- Allies for Every Child
- Alternative Family Services
- Aspiranet
- Association of Community Human Services
- Better Youth, Inc.
- Beyond Emancipation
- Bill Wilson Center
- Butterfly's Haven
- California Alliance of Caregivers
- California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- California State Association of Counties



California Youth Connection
 Casa de Amparo
 Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families
 Catholic Charities of Santa Clara
 Child Advocates of Silicon Valley
 Children Now
 Children's Advocacy Institute
 Children's Law Center of California
 Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento
 City Without Orphans
 Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice
 Corporation for Supportive Housing
 County Welfare Directors Association of California
 Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Los Angeles
 Creative Alternatives



Crittenton Services for Children & Families
 Cty Housing
 David and Margaret Child and Family Services
 Doing Good Works
 EA Family Services
 Edgewood Center for Children & Families
 El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency
 Encompass Community Services
 First Place for Youth
 Foster Care Counts
 Foster Greatness
 Fostering Promise
 Fresh Lifelines for Youth
 Gather Respect Advocate Change Engage (GLIDE)
 Generation Up
 GRACE/End Child Poverty California
 Heritage Group Homes, Inc.
 Hillside
 Hollywood NOW
 Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa
 iFoster
 Irvine Valley College Guardian Scholars Program
 Just in Time for Foster Youth
 Kamali'i Foster Family Agency, Inc.
 Lens Co
 Los Angeles County
 Lutheran Social Services of Northern California
 Make it Happen for Yolo County
 Mary's Path
 Mesa
 Monterey County Children and Family Services Agency
 New Alternatives
 Northern California College Promise Coalition



Oak Grove Sanctuary Palm Springs
 Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services
 Orange County United Way
 Orangewood Foundation



Peacock Acres
 Progress Foundation
 Public Counsel
 Reedley College
 The Rightway Foundation



Hillsides



Robles, LLC
 Sacramento County Executive Office
 Safe Place for Youth
 San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency
 San Bernardino County Administrator's Office
 Sanctuary of Hope LA
 Santa Ana Housing Authority
 A Sense of Home



Seneca Family of Agencies
 Silegra
 Specialty Family Foundation



St. Andrew's Residential Programs for Youth
 StarVista
 Stepping Forward LA



Students Rising Above
 Sycamores



Tha Hood Healers
 TLC Child and Family Services
 Unity Care
 Waking the Village
 Walden Family Services
 Wellnest



Whole Person Learning
 Urban Health, Inc.
 Urban Strategies Council



Youth and Family Programs



And 102 youth and young adults who have experienced foster care in California:



Ngozi Alumona, San Diego County
 Laura Alvarez, Santa Clara County
 Marlenne Arellano, Los Angeles County
 Desiree Armstrong, Fresno County
 Maria Baldovinos, Fresno County
 Grace Banks, Merced County
 Daniel Barragan, Orange County
 Daniel Bisuano, Los Angeles County
 Naseer Brown, Los Angeles County



mesa



OPTIMIST
YOUTH HOMES & FAMILY SERVICES



Richard Butcher, Yolo County
 Iziko Calderon, Los Angeles County
 Ashlee Campbell, San Bernardino County
 Yontae Capers-Stinson, Los Angeles County
 Katherine Carpenter, Sutter County
 Artem Chebnev, Los Angeles County
 Kelly Clamens, Riverside County
 River Covey, Orange County
 Elijah Crane, Merced County
 Christina Crimi, San Bernardino County
 Travis Crown, Los Angeles County
 Vanessa Cruz Plascencia, Sonoma County
 Rashanda Dauphine, San Francisco County
 Jessica Demartini, San Bernardino County
 Sherbert Diaz, Los Angeles County
 Destiny Dominguez, San Diego County
 Michelle Doupe, Placer County
 Marcelo Elliott-Lopez, Sacramento County
 Richard Espinoza, Merced County
 Emily Estrada, Los Angeles County
 Destiny Galvan, Los Angeles County
 Violet Gonzales, Sonoma County
 Natalie Goodliffe, Los Angeles County
 Kayla Gordon, Contra Costa County
 Carissa Guillen-Neria, San Bernardino County
 Monica Guss, Sacramento County
 Whimzi Ha, Los Angeles County
 isiaah haro, Merced County
 Joachim Hausser, Los Angeles County
 Tajanea Hayes, San Bernardino County
 Vicclaudiana Hernandez, Los Angeles County
 Karina Hernandez, Los Angeles County
 Ashley Holly, Los Angeles County
 Tyrese Holt, Los Angeles County
 Yuki Huang, San Francisco County
 Rozan Jaara, Riverside County
 Naomi Jimenez, Los Angeles County
 Adriana Johnson, Contra Costa County
 Faith Johnson, Los Angeles County
 Dakota Kaiser, Sonoma County
 Dennis Kelley, Sacramento County
 Zarah Latifi, Butte County
 Carolina Llerenas, Los Angeles County
 Juliana Lopez, San Diego County
 Luzvianeth Lopez, Orange County
 Navya Mackey, Los Angeles County
 Jeffrey Madrid, Los Angeles County
 Melissa Martel, Los Angeles County



silegra



Stepping Forward LA



Whole Person Learning



Maybelline Mejia, Los Angeles County

Jade Mendez, Los Angeles County

Ari Metzli, Los Angeles County

Angelyn Meza, Merced County

Quincy Monroe, Los Angeles County

Joelynn Montelongo, Butte County

Ilynne Nava, San Bernardino County

Maria Olaiz, Orange County

Aamiyah Orozco, Orange County

Victoria Ortiz, Sonoma County

Deyanira Paulino, San Diego County

Axel Pecero, Los Angeles County

Keegan Pederson, Butte County

Caitlin Peterson, Sacramento County

Cherise Pratti, Los Angeles County

Charles Prowse, Sonoma County

Isela Ramirez, Orange County

Sasha Randolph, Santa Clara County

Raylene Raya, San Bernardino County

Pika Ritz, Los Angeles County

Elizabeth Robinson, Los Angeles County

Aahloni Robinson, Los Angeles County

Maria Rocha, Los Angeles County

Francisco Romero, Contra Costa County

Leonardo Romero, San Francisco County

Dianna Romero, Contra Costa County

Nathalie Romero, Los Angeles County

Janet Sandoval, Los Angeles County

Jazmine Sapenter-Coulter, Yolo County

Jacob Seibert, Butte County

Sara Smith, Butte County

Jenessa Smith, San Diego County

Ana Sosa, Los Angeles County

Kadie Staggs, Shasta County

Lauren Stanton Horsey, Orange County

Joel Swazo, Los Angeles County

Talya Thompson, Los Angeles County

Ari Tippett, Los Angeles County

Aleecyah Ward, Butte County

Keairah Washington, Los Angeles County

Deandre Waters, Yolo County

Amari Weatherby, Los Angeles County

Lania Whiteside, Los Angeles County

Emanuel Williams, Solano County

Tyler Zeno, Sacramento County

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Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 5
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Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate Pro Tempore
Jason Sisney, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
Kelsy Castillo, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Skinner
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Timothy Griffiths, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
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Rosie McCool, Chief Probation Officers of California
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