



**April 6, 2010**

**To the Alaska State Legislature:**

As current and former foster youth of Alaska's child welfare system, we would like to express our support for House Bill 126. HB 126 aides foster youth as they make the transition into adulthood, oftentimes without a safety net or family to turn to for support once they have entered into the world on their own.

Studies show that the benefits greatly outweigh the costs to society for youth who extend foster care to age 21. Youth who extend care have better overall outcomes throughout the course of their lives. Allowing young people to remain in care until age 21 is associated with increased postsecondary educational attainment, delayed pregnancy, higher earnings, and a greater likelihood of receiving independent living services.

Statistics show that youth who leave Alaska's foster care system become homeless at a rate of 40%, fall behind in their education, are at risk of early pregnancy, and have a high rate of adult incarceration. The purpose of this bill is to help children and youth in foster care throughout the state make a successful transition to independence.

Many young people who venture out into the world on their own, have caring parents willing to allow them the option of coming home if they fall through the cracks when asserting their independence. Youth who leave the foster care system, don't have the luxury of going home. Allowing youth to re-enter the foster care system once they have left, creates a safety net for our young people and allows them room for growth.

The members of Facing Foster Care in Alaska know that this is an important bill. It will benefit the community at large by creating opportunities for foster youth to become productive, successful members of society as adults.

Thank you for your support in improving the lives of Alaska's foster children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amanda Metivier'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Metivier  
*FFCA Coordinator*