

HB

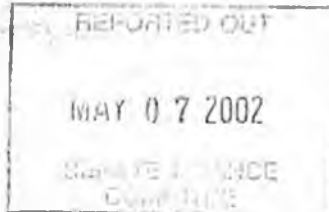
2009

SFIN

FILE

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 4/25/02



FURTHER:

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 05/07/02

Finance Committee considered **CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 209(HES)**

HB 209 PROGRAM FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

"An Act directing the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a foster care transition program; relating to that program; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS _____ (_____)
- adopt previous S CS CS HB 209 (HES)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:

- same title
- new title

House Bill:

- same title
- technical title
- new: SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

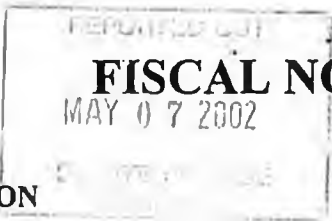
Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
HSS	2/8/02		✓	2

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>Linda Green</i>	✓			
<i>Alvin Austin</i>	✓			
<i>Don Miller</i>	✓			
<i>Steve D. Simon</i>	✓			
COCHAIR:				
COCHAIR: <i>Pete Kelly</i>	✓			



**STATE OF ALASKA
2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: CSHB 209 (HES)
 (H) Publish Date: 3/22/02

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____
 Title: DIRECT DHSS TO ESTABLISH A FOSTER CARE TRANSITION PROGRAM

Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 BRU: Purchased Services
 Component: Family Preservation

Sponsor: HOUSE (HES)
 Requestor: HOUSE (FIN)

Component Number: 1628

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2002) cost: _____

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2003 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The proposed legislation will have no new fiscal impact if enacted. Through the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, the State of Alaska shall receive no less than \$500.0 per year in federal funds to carry out programs designed to help children make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. This federal receipt authority is already included in the Department's base budget.

A specific requirement of the Independence Act is the provision of independent living services to former foster care youth between the ages of 18 to 20. The current statute, AS 47.18, only provides for state assistance to youth in state custody. In order to meet federal compliance, language must be included to allow for the provision of funds and services to individuals who have left the Alaska foster care system and emancipated from state custody.

Prepared by: Theresa Tanoury, Director
 Division: Family & Youth Services
 Approved by: Elmer A. Lindstrom, Deputy Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health & Social Services

Phone: 465-3191
 Date/Time: 02/08/2002
 Date: 02/08/2002

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB 209 (HES) #2

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

ANALYSIS CONTINUED:

HB 209 will give the department flexibility in developing a program for youth who are transitioning from foster care. The legislation allows for designating eligibility thresholds, standards, and limits to program services. Youth who "age out" of the foster care system are often ill prepared to live independently. They may not have strong familial or community ties that help one transition to self-sufficiency. This population of youth is "high risk". Frequently, former foster care youth become adults dependent upon public assistance, become involved in the correctional system, or fall into unhealthy behaviors. By providing support during the transition from foster care to independent living, the state can greatly increase the odds that youth who leave our foster care system can become successful, self-sufficient adults.



Health, Education, and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
House of Representatives

HB 209--PROGRAM FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN
Sponsor Statement

House bill 209 relates to the establishment of a foster care transition program for transitioning certain state foster care recipients age 16 to 21.

This bill is necessary so that the state may continue to receive federal money to provide the support and services needed to assure that these young adults are able to manage their independence after they have reached the age of majority in foster care. Programs are in place for these individuals while they are in state foster care; this bill will make it possible to continue to provide support and services after they reach the age of majority as required by the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.

This bill would direct the Department of Health and Social Services to design, develop, and implement a foster care transition program to provide support and services to young adults who have reached the age of 16 while in state foster care. The program may provide some or all of the following services to these young adults: education and vocational training, assistance in obtaining basic education and training, career and employment services, training in basic life skills, housing and utility assistance, mentoring and counseling, and other appropriate services to complement the efforts of these former state foster care recipients to achieve self-sufficiency.

FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999

Program Requirements Summary

Programs must be designed to accomplish the following:

- ▶ To identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as :
 - ▶ assistance in obtaining a high school diploma,
 - ▶ career exploration, vocational training,
 - ▶ job placement and retention,
 - ▶ training in daily living skills,
 - ▶ training in budgeting and financial management skills,
 - ▶ substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
- ▶ To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment:
- ▶ To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions:
- ▶ To provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults:
- ▶ To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

CERTIFICATIONS.

The Governor must certify the following:

- ▶ That the State will provide assistance and services to children who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and who have not attained 21 years of age.
- ▶ That not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) for a fiscal year will be expended for room or board for children who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and who have not attained 21 years of age.

- ▶ That none of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age.
- ▶ That the State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents.
- ▶ That the State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and that the State has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan.
- ▶ That the State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies.
- ▶ That each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; that there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and that benefits and services under the programs will be made available to Indian children in the State on the same basis as to other children in the State.
- ▶ That the State will ensure that adolescents participating in the program under this section participate directly in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and that the adolescents accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program.
- ▶ That the State has established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan.

YOUTH AGE 16 OR OLDER IN DFYS CUSTODY AS OF MARCH 2, 2001

Total Number	175
Number over 18 years old	36

Region	Age	
	16 years or older	18 years or older
Anchorage	59	14
Northern Region	58	12
Aniak	2	0
Barrow	8	2
Bethel	13	1
Delta	4	1
Fairbanks	20	4
Ft. Yukon	2	1
Galena	1	0
Kotzebue	1	1
Nome	3	1
St. Mary's	4	1
South Central Region	29	6
Cordova	1	0
Dillingham	2	0
Kenai	6	1
King Salmon	1	0
Kodiak	2	1
Mat-Su	11	3
Seward	2	0
Unalaska	2	0
Valdez	2	1
Southeast Region	29	4
Craig	1	1
Juneau	20	3
Ketchikan	2	0
Petersburg	2	0
Sitka	4	0
TOTAL	175	36

Permanency Plan Goal	Number
Adoption	12
Guardianship	25
Independent Living	6
Permanent Relative Placement	6
Permanent Foster Care	32
Return to Home	94

Youth age 16 or older in DFYS Custody as of March 2, 2001

The following tables are the result of a direct telephone survey to social workers who have youth age 16 or older on their caseloads who are currently in the foster care system. A total number of 182 youth were identified by PROBER. Of this population, 15 were identified as being under DJJ authority and were eliminated from the sample, leaving a total of 167 youth age 16 or older who were in DFYS foster care.

From this population, we received a total of 126 responses, for a 75% response rate. While the responses are not a stratified sample, it is safe to assume that simple percentages from the response population may be extrapolated to the total population. These tables also identify the number of youth in the response population that were age 18 or older as of March 1, 2001.

Youth's Permanency Goal	Number of responses	Percent of responses	Extrapolated number in total population
Adoption	10	7.9%	13
Long Term Residential	5	4.0%	7
Runaway	3	2.4%	4
Dismissed	2	1.6%	3
Guardianship	8	6.3%	11
Independent Living	71	56.3%	94
Relative Placement	3	2.4%	4
Return Home	17	13.5%	23
Unknown	7	5.6%	9
TOTAL	126	100.0%	167

Disability	Number of responses	Percent of responses	Extrapolated number in total population
physical	2	1.6%	3
learning	14	11.1%	19
emotional	27	21.4%	36
FAS/FAE	7	5.6%	9
substance abuse	7	5.6%	9
other	3	2.4%	4
none	66	52.4%	87
TOTAL	126	100.0%	167

Would remain in custody past high-school?	Number of responses	Percent of responses	Extrapolated number in total population
yes	42	33.3%	56
no	48	38.1%	64
maybe	7	5.6%	9
unk/na	29	23.0%	38
total	126	100.0%	167



Remember what happened...



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Anchorage Daily News

New program eases way for foster teens

TRANSITION: State prepares youths to live independently.

By Lisa Demer

Anchorage Daily News

(Published: April 15, 2002)

For all her college friends know, Jessica Williams is just another harried University of Alaska Anchorage freshman. She stresses over finals. She crams in homework between classes and her waitressing job. She goes home to do laundry.

But Williams' home is not typical. Neither was her life before college.

Williams, 18, is a foster kid. She's one of about 375 teenagers age 14 or older in Alaska's bustling-at-the-seams foster care system.

She's bucking the statistics about older foster children. More often than other children, they end up jailed, pregnant or homeless.

Williams is making it with help from a new program designed to ease older foster children into adult life "rather than just losing these kids to the four winds," said Matthew Turner, independent living project coordinator for the state Division of Family and Youth Services.

About 40 to 50 Alaska foster children "age out" of the system every year when they turn 18. Before now, the state would set them loose with a goodbye and a good-luck wish. But the youths often didn't know how to keep a job, an apartment or a relationship.

Around the country, studies have found that these former foster children often live in violence or poverty. Most can't go home to birth parents. They may have no one to call when the car breaks down or the rent is overdue.

"How many 18-year-olds are ready to have their own apartment?" Turner said.

Under the new program, when Alaska foster children turn 14, social workers, foster parents and residential care providers are supposed to start preparing them to live independently, he said.

Not even Williams' dormitory roommates know she spent her teen years in foster care. She wants other foster teens to realize that, with help, they can flourish too.

She decided to remain in state custody after turning 18 to hold onto extra state supports.

Generally, the state can continue to provide financial help for foster kids through age 20, as long as they are working toward independence and remain in state custody.

"I'm not ready to be on my own," Williams said.

Her childhood was rough. She is one of five siblings. The family moved frequently, forcing her to switch schools repeatedly.

A teacher at Lake Otis Elementary helped her mother and the kids get to Abused Women's Aid in Crisis, the local shelter, to escape violence in the household.

Her mother struggled with alcohol and crack cocaine and often didn't act like the mother, Williams said.

"I practically raised the younger kids. My little brother would call me Mommy," she said.

When her little sister was a baby, cranky with colic, Williams would stay up with her into the night. She would be too tired to get up for school the next day and so would drag herself in late. A teacher at Chinook Elementary kept a drawerful of food for her and worked with her after class to catch her up.

In 1997, DFYS stepped in after her mother didn't come home one night. It was right when the Permanent Fund dividend checks came out. The children were put into a foster home. Soon they were split up, two older ones in one home and the two little ones in another. The eldest sister didn't go into state care.

"It was hard not being able to see your brothers and sisters every day and not knowing where they were," Williams said.

Her mother, Sandy Darrow, said in an interview she was ill-equipped to be a good mom. Her daughter's recollections sound right, she said. She herself was abused as a foster child and then as an adopted child, she said. At 17, she was on her own and pregnant.

"It has always been like I am still a child raising children," said Darrow, 38. "I don't deal with things very well."

Williams spent her teen years shuttled between foster homes, her mother and her father, who lives out of state. Because of all the moves, she fell behind and dropped out of high school. She hurt inside, she said, struggling to understand why her family was messed up and torn apart.

A year ago, she moved to the foster home of Tom and Jo Ann Laughead, who specialize in caring for teenage girls. She began to turn around. She earned her high school equivalency degree.

"She did it on her own," said Jo Ann Laughead. "She's just a go-getter."

Last summer, she was among 20 foster teens who bunked for five days at UAA for the state's first independent living conference, where they sampled campus life and covered skills like household budgets, apartment hunts and time management.

Now Williams is among the first group of Alaska foster children to receive a tuition waiver at the university. The state is paying for their room and board. This summer, she'll be speaking at the conference. She is thinking of becoming a dental hygienist.

The state also offers older foster teens some other rudimentary support.

Williams' health care is covered through Medicaid. Her DFYS caseworker, Abbi Henderson, provides her with vouchers for clothes and essential items like shampoo. She gets to travel Outside twice a year at state expense to visit a little brother.

Henderson was always accessible, by telephone or e-mail, Williams said.

Without the support, she said, "I wouldn't know where to start."

Before the new push, the state spent just \$13,000 a year to help older foster children become independent, Turner said.

Through the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, Alaska has \$500,000 to spend this budget year and hopes for the same in years to come.

Besides covering college bills, the state can now pay for training at vocational schools. It can be more creative. For instance, the state could buy a plane ticket for a Native teen living in an Anchorage foster home to attend a potlatch in his home village. That would reintroduce him to the village so that when he shows up at 18, he's not a stranger, Turner said.

While the official goal is to get every foster child a permanent family, that doesn't usually happen with someone 14 or older, Turner said. Adoptive parents typically aren't looking for teens.

"They are not soft pretty babies that just want to hug you and love you," he said. "They are tough kids who are trying to figure out who they are."

Williams has more family support than many foster kids. She's close to her birth mother and also to her last foster family, the Laugheads. They took her out for dinner this month to celebrate her 18th birthday.

The Laugheads considered making the relationship officially permanent through guardianship, but then the state wouldn't have covered her college bills.

A bill now before the Legislature, HB 209, would allow the state to provide financial help to foster children even after they leave state custody, which it cannot do now. For example, the state could subsidize an apartment or provide a case manager for 18-to-20-year-olds who used to be in foster care.

Williams already has a place to go.

This summer, she moves back in with her foster family.

Close Window

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/25/02

FURTHER: Finance

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 4/24/02

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 209(HES)
HB 209 PROGRAM FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

"An Act directing the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a foster care transition program; relating to that program; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with S CS CS HB 209 (HES)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:

- same title
- new title

House Bill:

- same title
- technical title
- new: SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
HSS	2/8		✓	2

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	No REC	AMEND
<i>Gary L. ...</i>	✓			
<i>Dr. ...</i>	✓			
<i>Betty ...</i>	✓			
<i>...</i>	✓			
CHAIR: <i>Linda ...</i>	✓			

HB 209-PROGRAM FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SIGN - IN

NAME: Joanne GIBBES Subject/Bill No: 15209
Co./Dept./Title: DFYS - PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR Phone: 465-3023
Address: P.O. Box 110630 JUNEAU Zip: 99811
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
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Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

