

HB

126

<target><bill>HB 126</bill><subject>HB
126</subject><comm>HFIN26</comm></target>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

Sponsor Statement

CSHB 126(HSS): Success for Foster Youth

While we work hard to increase the success rate of Alaska's 2,000 foster youth, the homelessness and criminal activity numbers remain disconcerting. HB 126 makes two important fixes that will improve the lives and success outcomes of our youth. Currently approximately 29% of our foster youth end up incarcerated after leaving care, and roughly 37% end up homeless at some point in their life.

Foster Care Until Age 21

Following federal legislation signed by former President George W. Bush in 2008, 30 states have extended foster care until age 21 where a youth and state agree an extension is warranted. For youth who are not ready to stand on their own, an extra year in care can help develop the life skills and stability needed to succeed. Foster youth often have no one to call for support after leaving care, and an extra year of stability can make a profound difference. Extending foster care to 21 has been a priority for youth advocates, and the federal Fostering Connections Act provides federal funding to states that join in this reform.

Allowing Foster Care Reentry

When a youth leaves foster care, they are unable to return if they realize they made a poor choice. Sometimes a youth, faced with a host of problems, will make a mistake in seeking emancipation or leaving care. HB 126 allows reentry if it is in the youth's best interest, and provides for the Department to attach conditions to the reentry when reasonable. Currently at least 15 states allow reentry.

I would appreciate your support of HB 126, and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

January-May: State Capitol • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • (907) 465-2647 • Fax (907) 465-3518
June-December: 716 W. 4th Avenue • Anchorage, AK 99501 • (907) 269-0106 • Fax (907) 269-0109
Representative_Les_Gara@legis.state.ak.us

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 6
Bill Version: CSHB 126(HSS)
(H) Publish Date: 4/7/10

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-CSM-04-06-10 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
Title: Foster Care/CINA/Education of Homeless RDU: Children's Services
Component: Children's Services Management
Sponsor: Gara
Requester: House HSS Component Number: 2666

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURE								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual	204.2		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	204.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

CHANGE IN REVENUES (

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	73.5							
1003 GF Match	130.7							
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	204.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

The intent of CSHB126(HSS) is to extend foster care services to youth who stay in custody between the ages of 18 and 21, if it is determined to be in the best interest of the youth, and the youth consents to remain in care. It also extends the option to those youth ages 16 to 21 who have been emancipated to return to foster care.

The Office of Children's Services Online Resource for the Children of Alaska (ORCA) data base is mandated by the federal government and must be continuously updated to reflect changes in both state and federal law and policy. In addition, functionality in ORCA provides OCS the ability to claim federal reimbursement for eligible clients. Without these updates, OCS will not meet federal outcomes and mandates, will not establish the correct foster care rates for care providers of youth that are older than age 19, will not be able to claim federal reimbursement for costs associated with these older youth, and may be subject to federal fines.

Prepared by: Tammy Sandoval, Director
Division: Office of Children's Services

Phone 465-3191
Date/Time 4/5/10 2:00 PM

Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Date 4/6/2010

FISCAL NOTE #6

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB 126(HSS)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Functional Area	Enhancement Description	Total Jobs/Hrs	Total Cost
Update Services page with new youth Services	Page documents services OCS provides a youth or family member in care. The enhancement requires adding additional services such as Vocational Training.	200	\$22,000
Update Education page with post-secondary information	Page records youth education and training. The enhancement requires adding reference values for vocational and post-secondary education and training to record and report completion of the Services such as vocational training.	140	\$15,400
Update Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) page for unlicensed Independent Living Services	Page documents a child's IL placement. The enhancement requires updates to the services categories (foster care, group home, institution, etc.) and service types (going from 16-18 to 18-21). Additionally, updates to the business logic are needed to ensure	200	\$22,000
Update Out-of-Home Page for licensed Foster Care Services	The OHP page documents a child's placement with a licensed provider for correct FC payments. Services categories and service types for older youth required.	220	\$24,200
Update reference values for youth 18-21	ORCA pages use business logic that includes the person's age to complete work on the page. Updates to include older youth are required.	140	\$15,400
Update IV-E Eligibility calculations to include youth 18-21	Page calculates a child's eligibility for IV-E reimbursement funding. A new age category for older youth will be necessary.	340	\$37,400
Update Medicaid Eligibility calculations to include youth 18-21	Medicaid Eligibility page requires the new age category and new age parameters to determine eligibility for Medicaid services.	340	\$37,400
Update ORCA Reports to include youth 18-21	ORCA produces federally mandated and management reports that use age parameters. Parameters must be updated to include older youth.	76	\$8,360
Batch job updates to include youth 18-21	Background processing (batch jobs) determine eligibility reimbursement and payments amounts. Service types for older youth are necessary to correctly calculating reimbursements.	200	\$22,000
TOTAL FISCAL NOTE COSTS (COST BELOW WILL BE ABSORBED INTO CURRENT ORCA FUNDING)			\$200,200
Update Interfaces	Interfaces are information exchanges between ORCA and other systems such as EIS, NSTAR, JOMIS. The enhancement requires updates to the Medicaid interface to include older youth.	200	\$22,000
Update ORCA automated messages and ticklers	ORCA automated messages and ticklers are tracking tools for line workers. Updates to the messages and ticklers to include the new age category is required.	140	\$15,400
Updates to Provider Licensing	Licensing Page documents the provider's license to provide services based on the child's age. The enhancement requires adding new license service categories and service type for older youth in order to collect federal reimbursements.	76	\$8,360
Case Plan Documents	Older youth in Foster Care will require additions to ongoing case plans (such as "received GED" to document services and outcomes for the youth. parameters.	140	\$15,400
Service Intake	Page documents requests for services from OCS and requires updates to the age parameters to allow services intakes for youth over 18.	76	\$8,360
Protective services Intake, Investigation, and Provider Investigation.	PS intake and Investigations provide for protective services reports of abuse and neglect. Pages require updates to the age parameters to include youth victims over 18.	140	\$15,400

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 5
 Bill Version: CSHB 126(HSS)
 (H) Publish Date: 4/7/10

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-FCSN-04-06-10 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: Foster Care/CINA/Education of Homeless RDU: Children's Services
 Component: Foster Care Special Needs
 Sponsor: Gara
 Requester: House HSS Component Number: 2238

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation	Information						
	Required	FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURE								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims		41.0		81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		41.0	0.0	81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9

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

1002 Federal Receipts	2.2		4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
1003 GF Match	38.8		77.5	77.5	77.5	77.5	77.5
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	41.0	0.0	81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9	81.9

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of CSHB126 is to extend foster care services to youth who stay in custody between the ages of 18 and 21, if it is determined to be in the best interest of the youth, and the youth consents to remain in care. It also extends the option to those youth ages 16 to 21 who have been emancipated to return to foster care.

This fiscal note addresses increased foster care special needs costs for youth who remain in foster care beyond age 18. Special needs costs include: items such as youth specific travel (foster family vacations, biological family visitation, any necessary treatment or medical costs not paid by Medicaid, school or cultural events, or summer camp; tutoring; prescribed diet or food services; extraordinary clothing related to growth spurts or medically fragile conditions that exceed the allocated 10% of the foster care base rate; or damage costs of up to \$5,000 if the damages were caused by an act of the child or youth.

Prepared by: Tammy Sandoval, Director
 Division: Office of Children's Services

Phone: 465-3191
 Date/Time: 4/5/2010 12:00:00 PM

Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Date: 4/6/2010

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The following assumptions have been applied:

- 1) OCS successfully implements all federal program requirements to extend foster care to age 21 within the first 6 months of FY 2011.
- 2) The number of youth who return to foster care after emancipation will be minimal. An estimate provided by the Facing Foster Care in Alaska group equaled 3.
- 3) The number of youth who turn age 18 will remain somewhat consistent from year to year and are based on the average number of children in custody ages 17 through 19 as of February, 2010 [80 youth]. No consideration has been included in this note for a possible influx of youth into the program extension during the first year of implementation nor to possible growth in out years.
- 4) Calculations are based on full time equivalents (FTEs) to account for youth who move in and out of the program for varying reasons. FTEs are calculated using a 94.23% conversion rate.
- 5) Approximately 45% of youth ages 19 and 20 will remain in care. This assumption is not supported by any known Alaska statistics but is an estimate that ties to the average number of youth who experience some postsecondary education in the State of Illinois. Illinois one of the few states that have experience providing care to age 21. The assumption is that the majority of youth who remain in school may remain in foster care as well.
- 6) No monetary adjustments have been included to address the possibilities of youth who develop special needs such as medical fragility or pregnancy before age 21 and return to foster care.
- 7) Calculations use the average cost per child for special needs items.
- 8) 66% percent of the youth who remain in care will follow through with post secondary education or work at least 80 hours per month and remain within the requirements of the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to be eligible for IV-E federal reimbursement. This assumption is not based on data but an experience-based guess by OCS staff.
- 9) The foster care penetration rate and the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage will remain somewhat stable.

Average number of youth age 17 through 19 = 81. 81 youth x 94.23% FTE conversion = 76 FTEs. 76 FTEs applying the assumption that about 45% will remain in care through ages 19 and 20 = approximately 35 FTEs.

Estimated cost per FTE = \$2,340.00 annually x 35 FTEs = \$81,900. Federal reimbursement for these costs is estimated at 5.4% or \$4,422.6.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 4
 Bill Version: CSHB 126(HSS)
 (H) Publish Date: 4/7/10

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-FCBR-04-06-10 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title Foster Care/CINA/Education of Homeless RDU Children's Services
 Component Foster Care Base Rate
 Sponsor Gara
 Requester House HSS Component Number 2236

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information					
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURE							
Personal Services							
Travel							
Contractual							
Supplies							
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims	224.0		444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	224.0	0.0	444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5

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

1002 Federal Receipts	37.2		73.7	73.7	73.7	73.7	73.7
1003 GF Match	186.8		370.8	370.8	370.8	370.8	370.8
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	224.0	0.0	444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5	444.5

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of CSHB126(HSS) is to extend foster care services to youth who stay in custody between the ages of 18 and 21, if it is determined to be in the best interest of the youth, and the youth consents to remain in care. It also extends the option to those youth ages 16 to 21 who have been emancipated to return to foster care.

This fiscal note addresses increased foster care reimbursement costs for youth who remain in foster care beyond age 18 above and beyond those 18 and 19 year olds who already remain in care.

The following assumptions have been applied:

Prepared by: Tammy Sandoval, Director
 Division Office of Children's Services

Phone 465-3191
 Date/Time 4/5/10 12:30 PM

Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Date 4/6/2010

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The following assumptions have been applied:

- 1) OCS successfully implements all federal program requirements to extend foster care to age 21 within the first 6 months of FY 2011.
- 2) The number of youth who return to foster care after emancipation will be minimal. An estimate provided by the Facing Foster Care in Alaska group equaled 3.
- 3) The number of youth who turn age 18 will remain somewhat consistent from year to year and are based on the average number of children in custody ages 17 through 19 as of February, 2010 [80 youth]. No consideration has been included in this note for a possible influx of youth into the program extension during the first year of implementation nor to possible growth in out years.
- 4) Calculations are based on full time equivalents (FTEs) to account for youth who move in and out of the program for varying reasons. FTEs are calculated using a 94.23% conversion rate.
- 5) Approximately 45% of youth ages 19 and 20 will remain in care. This assumption is not supported by any known Alaska statistics but is an estimate that ties to the average number of youth who experience some postsecondary education in the State of Illinois. Illinois one of the few states that have experience providing care to age 21. The assumption is that the majority of youth who remain in school may remain in foster care as well.
- 6) No monetary adjustments have been included to address the possibilities of youth who develop special needs such as medical fragility or pregnancy before age 21 and return to foster care.
- 7) 66% percent of the youth who remain in care will follow through with post secondary education or work at least 80 hours per month and remain within the requirements of the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to be eligible for IV-E federal reimbursement. This assumption is not based on data but an experience-based guess by OCS staff.
- 8) The foster care penetration rate and the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage will remain somewhat stable.

Average number of youth age 17 through 19 = 81. 81 youth x 94.23% FTE conversion = 76 FTEs. 76 FTEs applying the assumption that about 45% will remain in care through ages 19 and 20 = approximately 35 FTEs.

Fiscal Year	FTEs	½ Year Cost/FTE	Annual Cost/FTE	Est. FFP	Total Annual Cost	Federal Funds	General Funds
2011	35	\$6.4	\$12.7	16.59%	\$224.0	\$37.2	\$186.8
2012	35		\$12.7	16.59%	\$444.5	\$73.7	\$370.8
2013	35		\$12.7	16.59%	\$444.5	\$73.7	\$370.8
2014	35		\$12.7	16.59%	\$444.5	\$73.7	\$370.8
2015	35		\$12.7	16.59%	\$444.5	\$73.7	\$370.8
2016	35		\$12.7	16.59%	\$444.5	\$73.7	\$370.8

Adopted 4/12/10

26-LS0309Q
Mischel
4/9/10

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 126()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GARA, Crawford, Kerttula, Gardner, Harris, Richard Foster, Edgmon, Muñoz, Lynn, Herron, Dahlstrom

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to extensions and resumptions of state custody of children; and**
2 **providing for an effective date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1. AS 47.10.080(c) is amended to read:**

5 (c) If the court finds that the child is a child in need of aid, the court shall

6 (1) order the child committed to the department for placement in an
7 appropriate setting for a period of time not to exceed two years or in any event not to
8 extend past the date the child becomes 19 years of age, except that the department, the
9 child, or the child's guardian ad litem may petition for and the court may grant in a
10 hearing

11 (A) one-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
12 beyond the child's 19th birthday if the extension is in the best interests of the
13 child; and

14 (B) [AN] additional one-year extensions of commitment

1 [PERIOD OF STATE CUSTODY] past 19 years of age that do not extend
2 beyond the person's 21st birthday, if the continued state custody is in the
3 best interests of the person and the person consents to it;

4 (2) order the child released to a parent, adult family member, or
5 guardian of the child or to another suitable person, and, in appropriate cases, order the
6 parent, adult family member, guardian, or other person to provide medical or other
7 care and treatment; if the court releases the child, it shall direct the department to
8 supervise the care and treatment given to the child, but the court may dispense with
9 the department's supervision if the court finds that the adult to whom the child is
10 released will adequately care for the child without supervision; the department's
11 supervision may not exceed two years or in any event extend past the date the child
12 reaches 19 years of age, except that the department or the child's guardian ad litem
13 may petition for and the court may grant in a hearing

14 (A) one-year extensions of supervision that do not extend
15 beyond the child's 19th birthday if the extensions are in the best interests of the
16 child; and

17 (B) an additional one-year period of supervision past 19 years
18 of age if the continued supervision is in the best interests of the person and the
19 person consents to it; or

20 (3) order, under the grounds specified in (o) of this section or
21 AS 47.10.088, the termination of parental rights and responsibilities of one or both
22 parents and commit the child to the custody of the department, and the department
23 shall report quarterly to the court on efforts being made to find a permanent placement
24 for the child.

25 * Sec. 2. AS 47.10.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

26 (v) In addition to the extensions of state custody ordered by a court under
27 (c)(1)(A) or (B) of this section, a court may grant in a hearing a resumption of state
28 custody that does not extend beyond a person's 21st birthday if the person

29 (1) consents to it;

30 (2) was placed in out-of-home care by the department immediately
31 before being released from state custody and the person was released to the person's

1 own custody;

2 (3) is in need of out-of-home care to avoid personal harm or
3 homelessness, or to enhance the person's ability to continue the person's education or
4 training or otherwise improve the person's successful transition to independent living;
5 and

6 (4) if requested by the department, agrees to reasonable terms for
7 resuming state custody that may include matters relating to the person's education,
8 attainment of a job or life skills, or other terms found by the court to be reasonable and
9 in the person's best interest.

10 * Sec. 3. AS 47.10.990(3) is amended to read:

11 (3) "child" means a person who is

12 (A) under 18 years of age;

13 (B) [AND A PERSON] 19 years of age if that person was
14 under 18 years of age at the time that a proceeding under this chapter was
15 commenced; and

16 (C) under 21 years of age if that person is committed to the
17 custody of the department under AS 47.10.080(c)(1) or (v);

18 * Sec. 4. This Act takes effect January 1, 2011.

Helen Phillips

From: Rose Foley
Sent: Tuesday, April 06, 2010 6:18 PM
To: House Finance Legislation
Cc: Rep. Les Gara
Subject: HB 126
Attachments: CSHB 126(HSS) Hearing request to (H)FIN.pdf; CSHB 126(HSS) Sponsor Statement.pdf; CSHB 126(HSS) Sectional Analysis.pdf; CSHB 126(HSS) Summary of Changes from HB 126.pdf; Backup for (H)FIN hearing request.pdf; CSHB 126(HSS) Fiscal Notes.pdf; CASA letter of support.pdf; FFCA letter of support.pdf

Representatives Stoltze and Hawker:

Please find attached the required materials for a hearing request.

New fiscal notes were adopted in the last committee of referral and are not yet available online. I've attached scanned copies of the documents distributed in the House H&SS committee on April 6, 2010. The committee substitute and fiscal notes will be available soon.

We expect Amanda Metivier of Facing Foster Care in Alaska to testify or answer questions as an expert witness. The Anchorage LIO should be teleconferenced, and we may need an off-net line for Ms. Metivier, depending on her availability.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Rose Foley
Aide to Representative Gara
State Capitol, Room 500
Juneau, AK 99801
465-2647 - Phone

Amanda Metivier has walked the walk. As program coordinator of Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), she knows from experience how the foster care system works. A foster care "alumni" and recent graduate of UAA's School of Social Work, Amanda has dedicated her career to improving the foster care system in Alaska.



Amanda moved to Alaska when she was 11 years old, but didn't enter the foster care system until she was 17 – after she dropped out of high school.

As a teen, Amanda had little motivation or desire to do much of anything. She was introduced to FFCA but ditched the first meeting. After much resistance, Amanda attended a statewide retreat where she met several other youth in a similar situation as hers. This time it was different. "I felt like I belonged," she said. "I connected with people in a way that I had never connected with anyone."

Her experience in foster care ended up being a best-case scenario. Oftentimes, siblings are split among different households, but Amanda and her sister were able to stay together. Her sister's friend's parents agreed to foster the pair. "I had a great experience in foster care, but then I started hearing about all these horror stories from different youth," said Amanda. "That keeps me going; I need to work to change those stories." She was in foster care until she "aged out" of the system at 20.

Dropping out of high school put Amanda very far behind, but with the encouragement of her social worker, Tom McRoberts, she worked hard to catch up and earned her GED in '02. She was able to find funding for college, and enrolled in courses at UAA's School of Social Work. She did her practicum work with Casey Family Programs, where she helped develop programs for FFCA. Amanda earned a Bachelor of Social Work from UAA in 2008, and her practicum turned into her first professional job.

In her role as coordinator for FFCA, Amanda helps link youth and foster care alumni to resources and teaches them how to advocate for themselves on an individual level as well as a system-wide level. FFCA is supported by Casey Family Programs and Covenant House of Alaska, and works to improve the system through sharing experiences, supporting and educating youth and social services, and implementing positive change in society as a whole.

After several years, Amanda and Tom have reconnected and are now working together professionally. Tom now works with UAA's Family & Youth Services Training Academy. They work hand-in-hand to co-train social workers on youth development. "Amanda has helped me grow as a trainer," Tom said. "I really learn a lot from her; she's an expert at working with foster care youth and alumni. She knows their issues, their point of view and their concerns."

At 25, Amanda is now a foster parent to a 19-year-old young woman whose initial foster care placement fell through around Christmastime. This is her 24th placement. "There's a serious lack of

Distributed by Rep. Gara

foster homes in Alaska," Amanda said. "Some of these youth have had 50 plus placements; they're so used to being bounced around."

Amanda explained that there's a 12 percent graduation rate among youth in foster care in Anchorage. "It's hard for them to focus on education. As children and youth move from home to home and school to school, the value of education gets lost in the mix."

In a Compass Piece she wrote for the Anchorage Daily News, Amanda stated: "As a former foster child, I know too well about the limited options surrounding education as a child becomes an adult and ages out of the system. ... For many of Alaska's foster children, education or vocational school beyond high school is not really an option."

"I think some foster youth fail because they're not set up for school," Amanda said. She explained how one foster care alumna started taking classes at UAA but soon after dropped out because she didn't know how to manage her time, and she didn't have basic things like an alarm clock and deodorant. "Students have to be willing to seek out the resources available to them and discover their own learning style." Amanda admitted to being very overwhelmed when first starting her classes at UAA. It took her three times to pass a math class. "I finally took it online, and that worked for me."

According to the Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study, 73 percent of foster children wind up on public assistance after leaving foster care. Forty percent are homeless within a year of leaving foster care, 43 percent wind up in the criminal justice system, and 78 percent receive no help in planning their future beyond foster care. The study was a collaborative effort between the UAA School of Social Work, Casey Family Programs, Tribal State Collaboration Group and the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services.

To help combat these trends, Amanda is actively involved with the "Mentoring Spirit" pilot program, organized by Alaska Community Services. Spirit is an acronym: "S" for success, "P" for prosperity, "I" for independence, "R" for respect, "I" for integrity and "T" for tolerance. The program connects youth in the system with mentors that have been through the system themselves.

Besides simply listening and caring, mentors can help youth in foster care learn new life skills, apply for scholarships and plan for a future career. Amanda's hope for the program is to see young people leaving foster care with a permanent connection to a mentor.

Amanda has a passion for child welfare administration and policy. "I see first-hand how policies affect people and I know what needs to be changed." As chair of the Education and Foster Care Committee, Amanda is currently advocating to increase school stability among foster care students. She's also working to make it easier for fostered youth to receive the orthodontia care they need and increase the "age out" to 21.

Though Amanda has done much in her 25 years, she still has ample work ahead of her. "I feel like I have a lot more to learn." She applied to UAA's Master of Social Work program and will begin taking classes this fall.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

Sectional Analysis

CSHB 126(HSS): Success for Foster Youth

Section 1

Allows the Office of Children's Services to extend foster care until age 21, and to allow voluntary reentry into foster care.

Section 2

This section will be deleted, as this provision recently passed the legislature in a Senate Bill.

Section 3

Conforming language. Extend the eligibility of foster care to age 21.

Section 4

Established the effective date of January 1, 2011.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

Summary of Changes From HB 126(HSS)

Section 1

Reverts to existing statute, which allows for one-year extensions of commitment under (A) of this section, rather than the two-year extensions in the HSS committee substitute. This change was made at the suggestion of the Department of Law, Child Protection Section.

Subsections (i) through (iv) were moved to Section 2 of the new bill.

Section 2

Section 2 of the HSS committee substitute was recently passed by the full Legislature, and has been deleted.

The new Section 2 defines the situations under which a person may reenter state custody. These provisions were included in subsections (i) through (iv) of the HSS committee substitute.

Section 3

Makes a minor technical change to the definition of a "child" to make clear that the department will have jurisdiction to allow a youth to come back into foster care. "Child" includes a person under 21 if that person is committed to the custody of the department.

This change was made at the suggestion of the Department of Law, Child Protection Section.

Section 4

No change.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

MARCH 23, 2010



REPORT NUMBER 10.209

YOUTH RE-ENTERING FOSTER CARE AFTER TURNING 18

PREPARED FOR REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

BY TIM SPENGLER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

You asked whether Alaska or any states allow youth 18 years of age or older to re-enter the foster care system. Additionally, you wanted to know if child welfare organizations have developed a "best practices" model for re-entry after the age of 18.

Alaska law does not allow youth who have left foster care to re-enter after they are age 18 or older.¹ Under Alaska Statute 47.10.080, youth are able, in certain circumstances, to extend their stay in foster care until they are 19 or 20; however, if they have left foster care, and are 18 or older, they are unable to re-enter the system.

We identified 15 states (Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, and Washington) that allow youth over age 18 to re-enter foster care under varying circumstances. Below we highlight aspects of each state's program.² As you will note from this summary, re-entry in many states is dependent on the education plan of the youth in question.

- ◆ Alabama - Youth who were in "out of home" care on or after their 18th birthday have the option of returning to care if they are living in a situation in which there is an identifiable risk of harm.
- ◆ Arizona - Teens and young adults who left the Arizona foster care system at age 18 or older may request to re-enter foster care prior to their 21st birthday. All foster care services end on the person's 21st birthday.
- ◆ Connecticut - Until they turn 21, youth can return to care as long as they were in care on their 18th birthday, and the purpose of re-entry is to either obtain education or work skills for transition into adulthood.

¹ Mike Lesmann, community program manager, Office of Children's Services, Department of Health and Social Services at (907) 465-3548.

² We identified state programs through a number of sources including the Casey Family Programs (<http://www.casey.org>), the Child Welfare League of America (<http://cwla.org>), and the National Conference of State Legislatures (<http://www.ncsl.org>).

- ◆ Illinois – Former foster care youth under 21 may “reengage” with the Department of Children and Family Services in order to secure essential supports and services to learn to live independently as adults.³
- ◆ Indiana - Youth must meet eligibility requirements to re-enter care under the Older Youth in Foster Care Program. In Attachment A, we include the Indiana Code (31-28-5.7-1) pertaining to this program as well as correspondence from the Department of Child Services outlining the program. Indiana's Independent Living Program is detailed at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2530.htm>.
- ◆ Iowa - A youth can return to care provided that he or she is still working on a high school education or GED. Individuals can remain in care up to the age of 20.
- ◆ Kentucky - Youth have up to six months after reaching age 18 to decide if they would like to return to care.
- ◆ Maine - Youth must typically enroll in the optional Volunteer Extended Care Program prior to, or within 90-days following, reaching age 18. In some exceptional cases youth who have been out of care for more than 90 days are permitted to re-enter foster care. Program details are available at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/cw/v92.htm>.
- ◆ Massachusetts - Youth may request to re-enter care as long as they have not reached age 22, even if they voluntarily exited at age 18.
- ◆ Minnesota - Youth are able to re-enter care as long as they were “wards of the state” and have not reached the age of 21, even if they voluntarily exited at age 18. The re-entry provision does not apply if the youth's parents' parental rights have not been terminated.
- ◆ New York - A youth age 18 or older can re-enter care if that individual is on a “trial discharge” and is in need of services. Youth age 18 or older with a status of “final discharge” cannot return to care, although some agencies at their own discretion may provide assistance to these youth.
- ◆ Oklahoma - If a youth has exited care without completing the requirements for a high school diploma or without obtaining a GED, that individual may return on a voluntary basis if a placement is available. The youth may remain in care until completing high school or the GED, or until age 21, whichever comes first.
- ◆ Texas - The Return to Care program allows certain eligible youth age 18 to 21 years of age to return to care in order to attend high school or GED courses (up to age 22), or to attend a vocational or technical program (up to age 21). In Attachment B, we provide a copy the pertinent Texas Administrative Code (Rule 700.346) as well as Return to Care policy

³ The full 34-page text of enrolled House Bill 4054, which allows for reengagement of former foster youth, can be accessed at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/>

information taken from the Department of Family and Protective Services handbook.

- ◆ Virginia - If a youth decides to leave foster care, he or she can resume independent living services as long as he or she returns within 60 days of discontinuance of services.
- ◆ Washington - Youth can re-enter foster care via the Foster Care to 21 program within six months of leaving care if they are enrolled in a post-secondary education program. (We include a program description as Attachment C.) A Washington State Institute for Public Policy report from January 2010 found that Foster Care to 21 participants had higher college attendance rates, fewer arrests, and used food stamps for a shorter period of time than did foster youth who graduated from high school before the program was available. The report (also included in Attachment C) estimates a taxpayer benefit of \$1.35 for every dollar spent on the program.

In Attachment D, we include the statutory language from both Virginia (CV 63.2-905.1) and Washington (RCW 74.13.031) pertaining to former foster care youth over 18 reentering the system.

We could identify no "best practices" or official policy positions put forth by child welfare or foster care organizations regarding allowing youth over 18 to re-enter foster care. Nevertheless, it is commonly held by experts in the field that many, if not most, 18 year-olds—whether they were in the foster system or not—are ill-equipped to function as independent adults. To that point, we include an issue brief (Attachment E), from the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children entitled, "When Should the State Cease Parenting?," which suggests that allowing youth to remain (or re-enter) foster care past age 18 would benefit both them and society.

Attachment E also contains a print article from National Public Radio entitled, "Generation Next in the Slow Lane to Adulthood." The piece examines how the current generation of young adults is quite dissimilar to past generations in terms of becoming independent from their parents and being prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood.

We hope you find this information to be useful. Please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

Attachments available upon request.
Contact Rep. Gara's office at 465-2647.

Facing Foster Care in Alaska **Policy Agenda 2008**

In May of 2008, the youth and alumni of Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) came together from across the state and gathered in Anchorage to share their ideas and experiences about life in Alaska's foster care system. During their gathering youth/alumni brainstormed ideas on what they thought would be most beneficial to them and others in foster care in Alaska. As a result of these ideas, the members of FFCA voted to create this policy agenda.

Tuition Waivers for ALL foster youth in the state of Alaska

The University of Alaska Anchorage currently offers 10 Presidential Tuition Waivers a year to foster youth who are eligible for the OCS Independent Living Program. A young person must have been in foster care on or after their 16th birthday for six consecutive months in order to be eligible for the waiver program. Since these waivers are competing, not every young person in Alaska who applies will receive one. Youth who are placed in a guardianship, adopted, or reunified before age 16 are not eligible to apply for the waiver. Many states provide Tuition Waivers or other forms of reimbursement for college expenses to foster youth interested in pursuing post-secondary education. The youth and alumni of FFCA feel that by providing All of Alaska's foster youth with tuition waivers there would be a higher percentage of foster youth attending post-secondary education. Studies show that approximately 17% of young people who exit foster care pursue post-secondary education, and only about 1% graduate from a four year degree or certificate program. FFCA would like to see that All of Alaska's foster youth are provided with tuition waivers to reduce the stress of worrying about college expenses and knowing that they are guaranteed a higher education.

Support to foster youth pursuing post-secondary education

Many of the youth and alumni who attend post-secondary education programs in Alaska have complained about not having any supports to help them achieve their goals. FFCA members would like to see that universities and vocational programs have supports put in place for foster youth transitioning to higher education. FFCA members recommended adult or alumni mentors, a family to spend the holidays with, and someone within the

university or vocational program to talk with about stressors. If every youth in Alaska's foster care system made a permanent connection with a caring adult during their stay in foster care this would be less of an issue. FFCA members also recommended implementing the, "Circles of Support Program," to ensure youth in care are making permanent connections with caring adults before exiting from care.

More Independent Living Funds going to youth/alumni

The state of Alaska currently gets approximately \$500,000 a year (FY2008 \$518,814) in Federal Chafee funds to be used for youth in foster care to work toward independent living. There is currently no state match for this money and it is being stretched very thin as the states Independent Living Program grows, and begins to offer more programs and resources to youth in transition. The youth and alumni of FFCA would like to see that more of this money is offered to youth and alumni transitioning from foster care for housing, education, life skills training, and anything that may support them in becoming independent productive members of society. FFCA is also aware that many states provide a match for the Chafee dollars they receive and would like to see that this is made possible by the state of Alaska.

Transitional Living for youth

Alaska currently allows for youth who turn 18 in foster care the option to extend their time in state custody until the age of 20. There many states that allow for youth to extend custody until age 21, or to leave custody and re-enter if they are willing to pursue post-secondary education. According to the Alaskan Alumni Study 38% of Alaska's alumni reported being homeless after exiting foster care. The Covenant House Shelter in Anchorage reports that two-thirds of their current population is comprised of current and former OCS youth. The youth and alumni of FFCA would like to see a stronger focus in the area of transitional housing for youth who exit from the foster care system. FFCA members shared ideas and recommend allowing youth to remain in state custody while living in college dorms, apartments on their own, or other least restrictive environments outside of the traditional family foster home after reaching age 18.

Independent Housing Program

Some states currently allow for foster youth to live, "on their own," after reaching age 18, but to remain in state custody and receive foster care payments on behalf of themselves until the age of 21. This allows for foster youth to continue services with their social worker as well as other services offered to youth in custody, and learn to successfully transition out of state custody. The youth and alumni of FFCA would like to see a program such as this put into place in Alaska, or for the state to consider more creative placements for young people once they reach 18, but are not ready to exit from foster care.

Medicaid increased to age 21 under the Chafee Independence Act

There are currently 17 states that have chosen to enact the Chafee option to extend Medicaid to age 21 for former foster youth, Alaska is not one of these states. Currently, youth in Alaska's foster care system can receive Denali Kid Care until age 19 under the 1115 Waiver. After age 19 these young people can apply for adult Medicaid, but this holds them back from obtaining decent paying jobs and forces them to choose to go without medical coverage. Youth in foster care often attend counseling and have other medical needs, but they are forced to cut off many of these services when they leave custody. The youth and alumni of FFCA would like to see that Medicaid is increased for Alaska's foster youth to age 21 under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.

Braces covered under Medicaid

Children and youth in Alaska's foster care system often have only their Basic needs met because there is a strong emphasis on safety and permanency. There is little or no value put on whether a young person in custody needs braces, as this is usually a cosmetic procedure that parents would normally pay for. The youth and alumni of FFCA felt very strongly about this issue and believe that braces should be covered under Medicaid or by OCS. FFCA members discussed how braces could support higher self-esteem for a young person in foster care, and would give them one less thing to worry about besides the social pressures they face as a, "foster youth." FFCA is also aware that braces are covered under Medicaid in the state of Texas, so this could be an option for Alaska.

Decreased use of Psychotropic Medication for Alaska's foster youth

Many of Alaska's youth and alumni complain about being prescribed psychotropic medications after entering the foster care system for symptoms of depression, anxiety, trauma, attachment issues, and misbehavior. The youth and alumni of FFCA feel that these are all normal symptoms of child maltreatment and dealing with all that comes out of being placed in foster care. There has been a national focus on the use of psychotropic medications being over-prescribed for children and youth in foster care. FFCA members have also complained about side-effects caused by these medications resulting in a decreased ability to focus on their education as well as function in everyday society. The youth and alumni of FFCA would like to see that the prescription of psychotropic medications for Alaska's foster children and youth is decreased and reviewed more closely.

Definitions (according to FFCA)

Youth- A young person currently in state custody (foster care).

Alumni- A person who has spent any period of time in the foster care system

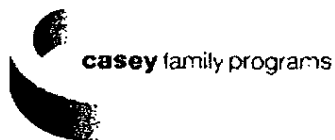
Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA)

Mission Statement: Our mission is to improve the foster care system through sharing our experiences, supporting and educating youth and social services and implementing positive change in society as a whole.

FFCA is Alaska's only foster care advocacy organization completely run by youth and alumni of the foster care system. Since their inception in 2003, FFCA has been working to improve Alaska's foster care system by sharing their experiences with people who can create positive changes for Alaska's foster youth. FFCA is a statewide organization that provides support to Alaska's foster youth and alumni and, gives them the ability to share their voice and become leaders in their community.

Acknowledgements

This document was drafted using the feedback from the youth and alumni of Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA). Statistics and information provided by Casey Family Programs and the Office of Children's Services as well as, various other child welfare resources. For questions regarding the content of this policy agenda contact: Amanda Metivier *FFCA President* Amativier@casey.org

[x Close](#)

State Child Welfare Policy Database

> Older Youth in Foster Care > Foster Care Age Limits > Age at which youth become ineligible to remain in foster care

State	When are youth ineligible to remain in foster care?
Alabama	21st birthday
Alaska	20th birthday
Arizona	21st birthday
Arkansas	21st birthday
California	Don't know
Colorado	21st birthday
Connecticut	24th birthday
Delaware	19th birthday
District of Columbia	21st birthday
Florida	18th birthday
Georgia	21st birthday
Hawaii	Depends on the situation
Idaho	19th birthday
Illinois	21st birthday
Indiana	21st birthday
Iowa	20th birthday
Kansas	21st birthday
Kentucky	21st birthday
Louisiana	21st birthday
Maine	21st birthday
Maryland	-
Massachusetts	Depends on the situation
Michigan	20th birthday
Minnesota	21st birthday
Mississippi	Depends on the situation
Missouri	21st birthday
Montana	-

Nebraska	19th birthday
Nevada	21st birthday
New Hampshire	21st birthday
New Jersey	21st birthday
New Mexico	18th birthday
New York	21st birthday
North Carolina	21st birthday
North Dakota	21st birthday
Ohio	Depends on the situation
Oklahoma	--
Oregon	21st birthday
Pennsylvania	21st birthday
Rhode Island	--
South Carolina	21st birthday
South Dakota	--
Tennessee	19th birthday
Texas	22nd birthday
Utah	21st birthday
Vermont	22nd birthday
Virginia	21st birthday
Washington	21st birthday
West Virginia	--
Wisconsin	19th birthday
Wyoming	21st birthday

www.childwelfarepolicy.org
Developed and Managed By Child Trends

Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care

The McKinney-Vento Act¹ applies to many children in DFCS custody and provides those children with rights that promote educational stability.

What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

- ❖ McKinney-Vento is a federal law that promotes stability, access, and academic success for homeless youth. McKinney-Vento also provides assistance for homeless youth with enrollment in a new school, transportation to school, and other educational and supplemental services. It promotes educational stability by allowing homeless youth to remain in their school of origin even if homelessness has caused them to move outside the school district. School of origin is defined as the school a student attended before becoming homeless or the school where the student was last enrolled.

Are children in foster care homeless?

- ❖ In order to be eligible for the benefits and services provided for by the McKinney-Vento Act, a student must meet the criteria for homelessness. Some children in foster care meet the criteria and are therefore considered homeless under the Act.
- ❖ The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as "(A) individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence...; and (B) includes - (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; *are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement...*"² Thus, some children in DFCS custody are considered homeless for the purpose of the McKinney-Vento Act, specifically children living in shelters, abandoned in hospitals, and children awaiting foster care placement
- ❖ Using McKinney-Vento to secure rights for children in foster care helps to minimize educational disruption. The child is able to remain in the same school, continue with the current academic curriculum, and is less likely to fall behind academically.

Are children covered by McKinney-Vento after they move into a foster home?

- ❖ Once the provisions of McKinney-Vento have been met, an eligible child remains eligible for services for the remainder of that school year even if s/he moves into a foster home.
- ❖ When the next school year begins, if the child continues to live in a foster home, s/he will no longer qualify under McKinney-Vento and at that time may have to transfer to a school in the district where s/he is residing.

What about the documents schools require to enroll a child in school?

- ❖ McKinney-Vento requires schools to immediately enroll homeless children in school even without records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records including immunization records, proof of guardianship, and proof of residency.
- ❖ The enrolling school must contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records to facilitate enrollment and the school should refer the child to the school liaison for assistance in obtaining immunization records.

What if the child has moved out of district and the old school refuses to allow the child to continue to attend?

- ❖ All decisions about where a homeless child shall be allowed to go to school must be made according to the child's best interests. In determining best interests of the child, the local educational agency shall "to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian."³

Created by
The Barton Child Law and Policy Clinic
Emory University School of Law
Campbell Hall
Atlanta, GA 30322

Tel 404 727 0664

- ❖ Whenever there is a disagreement between a school and a parent, guardian, or youth, the school must:
 - Immediately enroll the student in the school the parent, guardian, or youth chooses;
 - Keep the student at that school until the disagreement is settled;
 - Explain, in writing, its decision and the right to have the disagreement settled; AND
 - Send the parent, guardian or youth to the Georgia Liaison/Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth to settle the disagreement quickly. Please see the contact information below.

What if it is best to transfer the child to a new school in the district where the foster parents or relative placement live?

- ❖ Homeless children and youth have the right to stay in the school they went to before they lost their housing, to stay at whatever school they were enrolled in last, or to attend the local school where they are now living.

Is there any help with transportation?

- ❖ If McKinney-Vento applies to the child, then the school district must provide or arrange transportation for the student to stay at the school of origin, even if the student moves to a different city, county, or school district.
 - If a student is living in the same school district as the school of origin, then that school district has to provide transportation. If the student moves across district lines, then both districts have to work together to provide transportation.

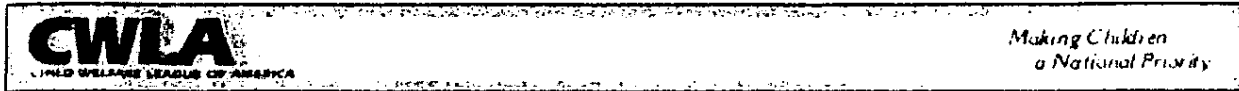
What type of transportation will the school provide?

- ❖ Schools can provide transportation in different ways, including:
 - Re-routing school buses and making sure buses go to shelters, group homes and other places where students live;
 - Providing passes for public buses and subways, including passes for caretakers when needed;
 - Using the transportation systems social services use;
 - Using approved van or taxi services;
 - Reimbursing parents, guardians or youth for gas;
 - Working with service providers and public assistance agencies to make transportation plans or provide transportation;
 - Getting local businesses or other agencies to help with transportation costs; and

Where can I get more information?

- ❖ The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, www.nlc.org.
- ❖ Georgia's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Coordinator is Mr. David Davidson. He can be reached at phone 404-651-7555 or e-mail ddavidso@doe.k12.ga.us.
- ❖ The Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, www.galawcenter.org, phone: 404-681-0680.

¹ The McKinney-Vento Act codified as amended at 42 U.S.C.A. §11432 through §11434a(2)(2004).
² 42 U.S.C.A. §11434a(2)(B)(2004) (emphasis added).
³ 42 U.S.C.A. §11432(3)(B)(i)(2004).



CWLA 2008 Children's Legislative Agenda

Youth Services

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Action

- Pass the Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act.
- Pass the Medicaid Foster Care Coverage Act.
- Expand eligibility and improve services to youth in the child welfare system, or who were formerly in child welfare, through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. Expand eligibility for independent living services to age 24, including room and board. Increase funding to at least \$200 million to support expansion of eligibility and services.
- Improve education opportunities for youth in foster care by making improvements to the Education and Training Voucher program. Increase funding for the voucher program to at least \$60 million and ensure all of the funds are used for this purpose.
- Include provisions in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act to enhance education supports for children in foster care.
- Provide the necessary resources for implementing the National Youth in Transition Database.

History

Federal support for independent living services for foster youth began in 1986 when Title IV-E was amended to include the Independent Living Program to assist youth who would eventually be emancipated from foster care. In 1993, Congress permanently extended the authority for independent living. Significant improvements were enacted in 1999 with passage of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, in honor of the Rhode Island senator who was one of the law's sponsors and who died before it was enacted. The law allows states to extend Medicaid coverage to former foster children between 18 and 21 years old, and funding was doubled to \$140 million per year, which became effective in 2001. Also in 2001, Congress authorized an additional \$60 million in discretionary funds for education and training vouchers for youth who are eligible for the Foster Care Independence Program, as well as youth who are adopted from foster care after reaching age 16.

Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced the Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act (S. 1512) on May 24, 2007. This legislation would extend Title IV-E foster care funding to age 21.

In 2005, 24,211 young people left foster care simply because they became too old. This is referred to as aging-out of foster care. Many young people transitioning out of the foster care system face great instability once finding themselves on their own, with few, if any, financial resources, no place to live, and little or no support from family, friends, and community. The experiences of these youth place them at higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance, increased rates of incarceration, and homelessness.

This legislation would simply amend the current law that defines foster children to age 18. States would have an option to extend this to age 21. Under current law, limited funds are available under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (*see below*).

Medicaid Foster Care Coverage Act

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) introduced the Medicaid Foster Care Coverage Act (H.R. 1376) on March 7, 2007. This legislation amends title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish independent foster care adolescents as a mandatory category of individuals for coverage under state Medicaid programs.

For young people leaving foster care, lack of health care poses a substantial challenge. The Chafee Program allows states to extend Medicaid coverage to former foster children between ages 18 and 21. Despite Medicaid's tremendous advantage for youth in foster care, only 17 states had implemented the extension by early 2007.

Given the high rates of physical and mental health problems extensively documented among children and youth in foster care, access to health services is a critical factor as young people transition to adulthood. Because most children and youth in foster care are covered by Medicaid, use of the expansion option would allow a state to readily facilitate the transfer of a youth's Medicaid eligibility from one category to another without any gap in coverage as they exit foster care. Medicaid coverage should continue for all foster youth until at least age 21. Keeping medical records up to date and accessible is another challenge for young people involved with child welfare. Advances have been made in electronic record keeping, but more are needed.

John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program helps states provide services to young people who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, as well as former foster children beyond age 18. The program helps eligible children make the transition to self-sufficiency through such services as assistance in earning a high school diploma, support in career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, and training in daily living skills. In addition to the Medicaid coverage, the program allows up to 30% of the funds be used for room and board. Chafee is a capped entitlement with an annual ceiling of \$140 million, which has not been increased since 2001.

Adolescents constitute a major segment of the youngsters the child welfare system serves. Most youth enter out-of-home care as a result of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Others have run away from home or have no home. Young people transitioning out of the foster care system are significantly affected by the instability that accompanies long periods of out-of-home placement during childhood and adolescence.

The resulting harm to the youth themselves, their communities, and the society at large is unacceptably high. To reduce these outcomes, outreach to youth and the quality of services provided need to be improved. In addition, expanding eligibility for critical support for young people leaving

foster care will ensure a successful transition to independence and self-sufficiency, and reduce the numbers of young people who become homeless, unemployed, incarcerated, and/or at high risk of becoming victims and victimizers. To accomplish this improvement and expansion, funding for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program needs to be increased significantly.

Education

Reauthorizing the Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) is an opportunity to improve education outcomes for children and youth in foster care. McKinney-Vento provides access to essential federal education protections and rights for homeless children and youth. Children and youth who are eligible for McKinney-Vento have access to supports for school success that many children involved in child welfare lack: school stability or immediate enrollment if stability is not possible, school staff charged with ensuring their prompt enrollment, and more. While these protections currently apply to a subset of children involved in foster care, including those "awaiting foster care placement," states have defined this phrase differently. States vary widely in their application of these protections for this population. As a result, the opportunities for children and youth in foster care may depend on where they live. The reauthorization of McKinney-Vento provides an opportunity to ensure these protections are available to all children in foster care, with special accommodation for the needs and family dynamics that face children in foster care.

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program provides assistance of up to \$5,000 per year for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education for youth who age out of foster care or are adopted after age 16. Funding for this program has never reached the amount requested by President Bush-\$60 million-which itself is not enough to meet the need. The ETV program began receiving funds in 2003 and was set at \$42 million. In 2005, funding increased to \$46.6 million; however, for FY 2008, funds were reduced to \$45.3 million. Funding for the ETV program should be expanded to at least the level proposed by the President. Further improvements to the ETV program are needed, including adjusting eligibility to include youth adopted after age 14, and requiring technical assistance for states to ensure funds are fully utilized. Also, instead of being returned to the federal treasury, unused state ETV funds should be transferred to other states' ETV programs with demonstrated unmet need.

National Youth In Transition Database

Congress should provide the resources necessary for implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database. This new initiative is a tremendous opportunity to provide valuable information that will inform future improvements in services to young people. The funds for implementation should be a priority for Congress and not come at the expense of existing services or supports or reduced services to adolescents receiving Chafee and ETV funding.

Key Facts

- In 2005, 24,211 children aged out of out-of-home care.^{1, 2}
- A study of young adults who had spent a year or more in foster care between age 14 and 18 found that 25% had experienced post-traumatic stress, compared to 4% of the general adult population.³
- Three in 10 of the nation's homeless adults report foster care history.⁴

- A recent study found that one-third of older youth in foster care were identified by caseworkers as having one or more special mental health, medical, pregnancy and parenting, substance abuse, or developmental needs that significantly interfered with their ability to live independently.⁵
- In Clark County, Nevada, 55% of former foster youth reported not having health insurance after leaving foster care.⁶
- Forty-four percent of former foster youth in Wisconsin reported difficulty accessing health and mental health services.⁷
- The rate at which foster youth complete high school (50%) is significantly below the rate of their peers (70%), and the rate at which college-qualified foster youth attend postsecondary education (20%) is substantially below the rate of their peers (60%).⁸
- The Census Bureau reports college graduates make \$23,000 more per year than those with high school diplomas.⁹

Sources

1. Children who aged out of foster care are captured by the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) emancipation data element. Children who exit care to emancipation are those who reached the age of majority. [back](#)
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CWLA Contact

Tim Briceland-Betts
703:412-2407

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URL: <http://www.cwla.org/advocacy/2008legagenda16.htm>

Newsweek

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SOCIAL SERVICES

Children of the System

New research supports a radical shift in child-welfare policy for the thousands of teens who 'age out' of foster care at age 18, only to face high rates of homelessness, unemployment and incarceration.

By Daniel Heimpel | Newsweek Web Exclusive
Mar 9, 2009

Eighteen-year-old John Kyzer's blue eyes are bleary and the skin around them puffy as he paces a corner of Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. Kyzer has been spending his nights on a bench in front of a Starbucks. And now, he is dangerously close to entering the ranks of dozens of other former foster youth who "cop a squat" (sit) on concrete stairwells and sleep in "abandos" (abandoned buildings) up and down the street.

Soon after his 18th birthday, the state of California "terminated" Kyzer's case and he was forced to leave his group home. He moved in with his girlfriend and their 4-month-old baby in the home she shared with three generations of her family. Wanting to help support his son, Kyzer got a job at Starbucks and worked as many hours as the boss would give him. For two months his confidence brimmed.


But then he did something many teenagers do. He blew off work and was fired. Now, the door to his girlfriend's house is shut. Kyzer is on his own.

For Kyzer and many of the more than 25,000 other foster youth in the United States who "age out" of the system every year, there is no family and no support network to pick you up when you fall. Within two years of emancipation, half of Los Angeles County's foster youth will be unemployed, one fifth will be homeless and a quarter will have been to prison, according the Children's Law Center. Similar fates can be expected across the country for many of the 500,000 children who call the state their parents.

But a law signed by President Bush in the waning days of his administration could radically change the futures of these children. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 offers states matching federal funds to extend care to age 21 for all foster youth who choose to stay in the system after their 18th birthday. What's meant by "care" would vary state by state, but could include extending Medicaid coverage to age 21 (which about 20 states now do), providing housing vouchers or access to group homes, vocational training, educational funding and psychological counseling services. *

"We have known for a long time that kids don't suddenly become self-sufficient at the age of 18," says the federal bill's sponsor, Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington state. "The law we passed last year finally

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recognized the need to better provide the building blocks of success to these children."

Research released Monday suggests that the approach makes financial sense for a government weighed down by the costs of incarceration, welfare, Medicaid and homelessness incurred by former foster youth who struggle after emancipation. Conducted by the University of Washington School of Social Work, the study finds that caring for young adults until age 21 will represent a return of \$2.40 on every government dollar spent in California.

Experts hope the report will lead more states to implement the federal law. But adding anything to a state budget right now is a hard sell. Thus far only seven states have put forward such legislation, including California. And before the passage of the federal legislation, only two states had implemented comprehensive extended care for foster kids after age 18—Illinois and Vermont.

The study's leading researcher, Mark Courtney, director of Partners for Our Children, a public-private collaboration promoting child-welfare reform at the University of Washington, sees the federal legislation as the most radical shift in child-welfare policy in the last decade. "The government has been unwilling to help kids after 18 beyond teaching them independent-living skills," he says. "That is not what parents do. A parent is not happy to kick a kid out at 18 and say good luck."

Courtney's earlier work has shown significant long-term benefits for kids who get a few more year's care versus those who are pushed out of the system at 18. His hallmark "Midwest Study," published in 2005, was instrumental in shaping the current federal legislation. That report followed 732 foster youth through their 17th, 18th and 21st birthdays. It found that along with lower rates of incarceration, homelessness and unemployment, young people in a state like Illinois, which extends care until 21, were 3.5 times as likely to have completed a year of college than peers in states like Iowa and Wisconsin, which routinely cut care at 18. (Census data show that less than 3 percent of foster kids earn college degrees, compared with 28 percent of the population as a whole.)

"The minute we kick them out they start looking for their families," says Karen Bass, speaker of the California Assembly and coauthor of The California Fostering Connections to Success Act. The legislation plans to increase spending to \$70 million in California for youths age 18 to 21, largely through the newly available federal funds. "When they can't find their families, they make families of their own on Hollywood Boulevard. In L.A., they are couch surfing; you have groups of young people living together and it is homelessness, just a different form." Bass and coauthor Jim Beall say that despite the budget wrangle and deficits that California faces, the bill bears the name of 26 Assembly members, has wide cross-aisle support and will likely pass.

In this latest study of foster care, Courtney narrowed his focus on higher education. As he had already shown, young people in extended care were better equipped to pursue a higher level of education and thus vastly increased their lifetime earning potential. For an expenditure of \$37,948 over the course of extended care, Courtney concludes that those foster youth will earn \$92,000 more in their working life. "We are talking about spending \$38,000 over one to three years versus what it costs to incarcerate somebody for 20 to 30 years," says Bass. In California, the Department of Corrections anticipates the annual cost of incarceration will jump to \$53,000 in fiscal year 2009-10.

But these undeniable statistics are running headlong into the cold reality of a national financial crisis. "Here is the most significant piece of [foster-care] legislation in a decade and it may be slowed down by these

economic times," says Kathi Crowe, executive director of the Foster Care Coalition. "It's almost too bad it is optional." Nonetheless, Courtney believes that the evidence he has presented along with the National Youth in Transition Database, which will be implemented nationwide as of October 2010 and will track young people as they mature into adulthood, will force states to act. "At that point some states may be shamed into changing their laws if the outcomes of their former foster youth look much worse than the outcomes for youth in states that have extended care to 21."

But for Kyzer and the kids currently "copping a squat" on the streets, it may be too late. "I just wasn't ready," Kyzer says of being a father, holding a job and moving into his own place. Tonight he is couch surfing, but tomorrow, his only option may be an abando.

Find this article at

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/188493>

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Anchorage Daily News

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State isn't equipped to give youths a hand after they turn 18

ELISE PATKOTAK
COMMENT

(03/10/09 18:51:28)

I've said it before and I'll say it again. The state makes a lousy parent. It rarely remembers your birthday and it almost never takes a turn having all the relatives over for the holidays. But if you're a kid stuck in state custody, it's often all you have in the way of a parent except maybe for an ever changing cast of foster parents.

This is not a condemnation of the state or its system of caring for children in its custody. Given the resources we are willing to provide for this service, and given the needs of the children who become part of the system, the Office of Children's Services is pretty much doing the best it can.

The problem has always been that words are much cheaper than actual actions. So we make a big fuss about children being our future and then try to meet the needs of the future on a shoestring budget. If you think about what it costs to raise a child from birth to maturity under the best of circumstances, you can pretty much quadruple that cost for a child coming out of a nightmarish family situation who may or may not be already damaged almost beyond repair. Quadrupling the cost is probable a conservative estimate.

For many of these kids, the future is predetermined way before the state is actively involved. Whether it's because mom drank during pregnancy and brought the child into the world with 10 strikes already against him or her, or whether mom and dad created such a hellish family life of physical, sexual and mental abuse that the child is totally screwed up before he or she is 5 years old, the result is pretty much the same. The child starts life at an extreme disadvantage.

Take that child and put him into a state system that tries to supply some stability but is often hampered by rules that require the child to be bounced back and forth between birth family and foster care multiple times before the state is allowed to terminate parental rights, and you have the recipe for total disaster.

Anytime a child comes out of this kind of background with his or her head screwed on right, still able to dream of a better life and future, mentally capable of grasping academic subjects and studying for a career in life outside of adult penal institutions, I must stand up in awe and wonder and applaud that child's resilience.

There is a move in our state Legislature to allow the state to provide graduates of foster care and family services a chance at a postsecondary education, complete with some funding to support their living needs while they get their education. This is nothing more nor less than what most families do for their children as they start the process of emancipation into productive adults.

But kids coming out of the state system usually don't have a family willing and able to pick up the slack while they get that education. They have no one to turn to who can guide them through the shoals of applying for housing, putting a budget together, or getting a part-time job to help meet expenses. These kids don't have something as simple as an adult they can shoot the breeze with

over the future and what's out there for them. You know, the kind of conversation you have with your kid while you're driving them to the movies or school or sitting around during the commercials on ESPN.

The state has already started to try and meet these needs through transitional living assistance to young people as they age out of the system. That's a great start. But it isn't enough, because once we wave goodbye to them when they turn 18, they are on their own at a time when most of us would have been hard pressed to make good decisions for our future without some continuing adult guidance.

That these kids survived despite what their birth families did to them is a miracle. That they can come out of the state system and still have dreams of a better future is astounding. That there is any debate at all that we should be doing all we can for them is mind-boggling.

Elise Patkotak is a writer who lives in Anchorage. Read her blog at www.elisepatkotak.com.

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**The Honorable
Representative Les Gara
Alaska State Capitol
Room 500
Juneau, AK 99801**

Re: SUPPORT HB 126

Dear Representative Gara,

I am writing to express the support of Friends of Alaska CASA (FAC) for House Bill 126. This bill, as you know, will help foster youth transition more successfully from state care to independent living.

Currently 38% of foster youth aging out of the system end up homeless.

This bill attempts to remedy this reality through several assistance measures, including extending foster care to age 21 and allowing for reentry into care until age 21 if a youth is emancipated or voluntarily leaves care after turning 18.

Additionally, HB 126 reflects a larger national movement among children's advocacy groups to extend foster care to 21 years of age. In fact, 30 states already provide this option. Extending foster care will allow youth to better prepare themselves for independent living, and avoid common problems (such as homelessness and dependence on public assistance) faced by foster youth aging out of the system.

Allowing former foster youth to reenter care after leaving voluntarily will support youth in their pursuit of higher education or vocational training.

Extending foster care and allowing reentry will improve foster youths' chance of success as they transition to independent living.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Zinn
Executive Director



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,

Amanda Metivier
FFCA Coordinator



Anchorage School District

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd
Anchorage, Alaska 99504-3135
(907) 742-4000

March 11, 2009

To Members of the House Education Committee:

I am writing in support of CS for HB 126 (EDC) which relates to the education of students who are homeless or in foster care or awaiting foster care. As you know, we have a large and growing homeless population in our district; we also have a large and growing number of students awaiting placement in foster care or who are in foster care. One of the major challenges for these young people is finding stability in their lives, including being able to attend school on a regular basis.

It is a well-known fact that when students stay in the same school for the whole school year, there is more opportunity for the student to be academically successful. The Anchorage School District and School Board have worked for years to help parents understand the importance of keeping their children in the same school as long as possible. In the case of homeless students, and those in foster care or awaiting foster care placement, we feel strongly that we need to follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act for homeless students, which requires us to provide transportation to and from the student's original school for the school year. In the case of foster children and those awaiting placement, we support the language in this proposed legislation as long as there is some funding for this requirement. The Anchorage School District provided \$150,000 to supplement federal funding for transportation last year and would anticipate an increase again this year.

I commend Representatives Gara, Crawford, and Kerttula for bringing this legislation forward and hope that you will support its passage.

Please feel free to contact me at comeau_carol@asdk12.org if you have need for more information.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Comeau
Superintendent

Ensuring All Students for Success in Life



Crisis Center • Community Services Center • Transitional Living

Representative Les Gara and Senator Bettye Davis
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

February 23, 2009

Dear Representative Gara and Senator Davis,

Thank you for introducing legislation to address the needs of foster care youth, both while they are in the state's custody and when they "age-out" of the current system. Providing resources and support to our foster care children decreases the need for long-term public assistance and criminal justice resources. Responding to research that clearly identifies proven strategies for assisting our youth to independent adulthood is not only compassionate, it is fiscally sound policy.

Between 35% and 50% of foster care youth become homeless after being released from care. Covenant House Alaska (CHA) serves the homeless and at-risk youth of our state through four main programs (50% of CHA youth have been involved in the foster care system). Our Crisis Center provides shelter, food, clothing, primary health care and support resources to homeless youth. Our Community Services Center is a drop-in center that provides case management, employment assistance, educational tutoring, counseling and substance abuse referrals and life skills training. Two different programs, Rights of Passage and Passage House help youth transition to independent living and self-sufficiency. Youth can participate in either program for 18 months with up to 12 months of additional aftercare.

Through these programs, CHA is certain that increased job training, educational opportunities, rental assistance and social worker visits will benefit children in foster care. Similarly, offering consistency whenever possible through maintaining one school for children despite changes in foster care placement is essential. CHA appreciates the multi-faceted approach HB 126 and SB 105 offers.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation and providing a voice to youth in foster care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deirdre Cronin".

Deirdre A. Cronin
Executive Director

Opening Doors for Homeless Youth

State of Alaska, P.O. Box 163640, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-1640 • (907) 222-1214 • www.chaak.org

Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA)
3108 W. 42nd Ave. #6
Anchorage, AK 99517
February 17, 2009

Representative
Les Gara
Alaska State Legislator
AK State Capitol Rm 500
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Gara:

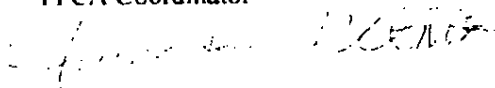
Your continued concern for Alaska's foster children and youth is admirable, and House Bill 126 demonstrates that concern.

As current and former foster youth of Alaska's child welfare system, we would like to thank you for your ongoing support in addressing the need for reform. Many of Alaska's foster children are being set up for failure due to a state system that is lacking many of the resources these young people need to succeed. Statistics show that youth who leave Alaska's foster care system become homeless at a rate of 40%, fall behind in their education, and have a high rate of adult incarceration. We wholeheartedly support your bill that creates opportunities for children and youth in foster care to succeed.

Thank you for your concern and your untiring pursuit to improve the lives of those who are less fortunate. You have our support.

Sincerely,

Amanda Metivier
FFCA Coordinator





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April 6, 2009

**The Honorable
Representative Les Gara
Alaska State Capitol
Room 500
Juneau, AK 99801**

Re: SUPPORT HB 126

Dear Representative Gara,

I am writing to express the support of Friends of Alaska CASA (FAC) for House Bill 126. This bill, as you know, will help foster youth transition more successfully from state care to independent living.

Currently 38% of foster youth aging out of the system end up homeless. This bill attempts to remedy this reality through several assistance measures, such as financial help for rent and other living expenses for up to a year after aging out, and tuition waivers for vocational or college education.

HB 126 will extend the applicability of transportation funding for foster youth so they can stay at the same school for an entire school year instead of transferring between different schools as is often the case. HB 126 will also require a quicker transfer of school records when kids do switch schools, thus easing the discomfort and disruption caused by the change.

Finally, HB 126 attempts to improve basic services within foster care. The most recent federal review of foster care in Alaska gave our state very low marks. HB 126 looks to set the bar higher by requiring the state meet federal once-a-month visit standards. Currently, some youth in care are only seen once every eight months, hardly sufficient to assist a young person with the myriad of difficult issues brought about by their unique circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sallye Werner
President
Friends of Alaska CASA

Ryan Zinn
Program Director
Friends of Alaska CASA



Anchorage School District

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99504-3135
(907) 742-4000

March 11, 2009

To Members of the House Education Committee:

I am writing in support of CS for HB 126 (EDC) which relates to the education of students who are homeless or in foster care or awaiting foster care. As you know, we have a large and growing homeless population in our district; we also have a large and growing number of students awaiting placement in foster care or who are in foster care. One of the major challenges for these young people is finding stability in their lives, including being able to attend school on a regular basis.

It is a well-known fact that when students stay in the same school for the whole school year, there is more opportunity for the student to be academically successful. The Anchorage School District and School Board have worked for years to help parents understand the importance of keeping their children in the same school as long as possible. In the case of homeless students, and those in foster care or awaiting foster care placement, we feel strongly that we need to follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act for homeless students, which requires us to provide transportation to and from the student's original school for the school year. In the case of foster children and those awaiting placement, we support the language in this proposed legislation as long as there is some funding for this requirement. The Anchorage School District provided \$150,000 to supplement federal funding for transportation last year and would anticipate an increase again this year.

I commend Representatives Gara, Crawford, and Kerttula for bringing this legislation forward and hope that you will support its passage.

Please feel free to contact me at comeau_carol@asdk12.org if you have need for more information.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Comeau
Superintendent



**Alaska Native
Tribal Health Consortium**

Administration · 4000 Ambassador Drive · Anchorage, Alaska 99508 · Phone: (907) 729-1900 · Fax: (907) 729-1901 · www.anthc.org

POSITION PAPER

CONTACT: Valerie Davidson, Senior Director
Legal and Intergovernmental Affairs
Through Pat Jackson, State Liaison for Alaska Native Health
523-0363 – pajackson@anthc.org

DATE: April 8, 2009

RE: HB 168 – State certification and designation of trauma centers and creating the
uncompensated trauma care fund
HB 169 – Appropriating \$5,000,000 to the uncompensated trauma care fund

POSITION: Support

ANTHC supports HB 168 and HB 169 as important steps in increasing the trauma care capacity in the state.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) is a tribally controlled, non-profit statewide tribal health organization formed pursuant to federal law to provide a range of medical and community health services for more than 130,000 Alaska Natives. It is part of the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS), which is owned and managed by the 231 federally-recognized tribes in Alaska and by their respective regional health organizations.

ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation jointly manage the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), the tertiary hospital of the ATHS located in Anchorage. ANMC is the only Level II Trauma Center in the Indian Health Service/tribal health system nationally. ANMC is also the only Level II Trauma Center in Alaska. The nearest Level I Trauma Center is in Seattle.

Trauma system development is a public health priority. A comprehensive system of trauma care is an essential part of the public safety net. Regionalized trauma systems based on a network of coordinated Trauma Centers designated at the appropriate level improves health outcomes and reduces costs. ANMC, as the highest level designated Trauma Center in the State of Alaska, is the lynchpin for the state's trauma system, and provides the foundation for continued statewide system development.

Trauma Center designations were created as a way to improve outcomes for patients who face extraordinary medical issues. On balance, early and appropriate medical attention to life-threatening health issues reduces overall length of stay in the hospital and reduced complications for many patients. Without trauma care, the costs of health care for trauma patients will be greater, including trauma patients who are Medicaid eligible.

The cost of providing trauma care at ANMC has more than doubled over the past four years and funding has not kept pace. ANMC's Trauma Center simply cannot be maintained at current revenue levels. If ANMC's Trauma Center designation is discontinued because funding levels have rendered the service unsustainable, the hospital faces reductions in staffing. Diversions of patients to non-tribal providers would increase, and because the federal government reimburses 100% of the cost of services provided for Native clients at Native facilities but a smaller percentage at non-tribal providers, there would be an increased cost to the state's general fund budget.

ANTHC supports HB 168 and HB 169 as important steps by the State to encourage and support appropriate trauma care options for Alaskans. Because we are Alaska's only Level II Trauma Center we recommend removing the language in section (d) on Page 2, Line 11, that limits appropriations to any one facility to 25%.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Johnson

From: butchr@gci.net on behalf of stacey david reay [butchr@gci.net]

Sent: Thursday, April 09, 2009 9:06 AM

To: Rep. Wes Keller

Subject: HB 126

- Mr. Keller: Please schedule a hearing for HB 126. As a licensed social worker who has worked with families involved with Office of Children's Services, I have become aware of the need for additional support for the foster youth aging out of the system. Please help support these kids.
-
- The primary intent with this bill is to help foster youth transition more successfully from state care to independent living. Currently between 30-40% of foster youth aging out of the system end up homeless. This bill attempts to remedy that through several assistance measures, such as financial help for rent and other living expenses for up to a year after aging out, and tuition waivers for vocational or college education.
- The bill also attempts to facilitate better academic success for foster youth, which has long term benefits through the transition out of care and into adulthood. HB126 will extend the applicability of transportation funding for foster youth so they can stay at the same school for an entire school year instead of bouncing around between different schools as is often the case. HB126 will also require a quicker transfer of school records when kids do switch schools, thus easing the discomfort and disruption caused by the change.
- The bill also attempts to improve basic services within foster care. The most recent federal review of foster care in Alaska gave our state very low marks. HB126 tries to set the bar higher by requiring the state meet federal once-a-month visit standards. Currently, some youth in care are only seen once every eight months, and this is hardly enough to know how a youth is coping with the myriad of difficult issues brought about by their unique circumstances.

Sincerely, Stacey David Reay, LCSW, 1941 Rebel Ridge, Anchorage, AK 99504, 907-337-6537

4/13/2009

4641

Matthew Johnson

From: Carol Ford [whoville@pobox.alaska.net]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 2:29 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: HB 126

Dear Representative Keller,

I am writing today to let you know that I strongly support House Bill 126 which provides for necessary support to foster children making the transition from foster care to full adulthood. By definition, foster children have had many ups and downs in their lives under the best of conditions, and as a mother and an active member of my community in Kenai, I am well aware that the transition from teen to adult is a powerful, difficult, important, exciting and dangerous time for everyone regardless of circumstances. It is not the time for their support system to drop them and leave them to fend for themselves.

My own children are past this time, and still turn to their folks for strength and purpose in times of setbacks and questions. As guardians of these children, the State of Alaska has the privilege and duty to offer them support and guidance and in making the best choices available to these citizens. It'll not only give their lives more potential, but will strengthen our state and our nation now and for the next generations.

I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 126.

Carol Ford

Matthew Johnson

From: Gayle Roth [rothgrk@alaska.net]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 2:12 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Lindsey Holmes;
Rep. Bob Herron
Subject: HR 126

I am in favor of HR 126.

As a 47 years resident of the State of Alaska and a CASA, I have concern for the children in foster care and feel this bill addresses some of their needs.

There are too many children in foster care. Let's give them the tools they need so they can make a difference in their own lives.

Respectfully,
Gayle Roth

4/13/2009

4643

Matthew Johnson

From: ViedeF97@aol.com
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 1:36 PM
To: Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: House 126 - strong support for

Representatives-

Please vote to support our foster kids with the benefits this bill will provide. I have been many hours over the years working with children; special needs, homeless and fostered kids there is great need for these kids of services.

Our state of Alaska is one that must do more to help those kids that are having a hard start in life and this is one of those ways. Providing the services that will allow them to transition into 'adulthood' with additional help its critical.

My husband and I, as residents of a 'bush' village are doing more each year to offer support where we can do children in our area.

This particular group of kids covered by this bill could see great benefits from just this small effort.

Please support passage of this bill.

Victoria and Roland Briggs
King Salmon, AK 99613

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4/13/2009

4644

Matthew Johnson

From: maryla@alaska.com on behalf of Mary La Fever [maryla@alaska.com]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 1:17 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: House Bill 126

Dear RHSS Committee Member Keller

Just want to let you know I am in SUPPORT of this bill. It seems to me that kids of all economic sectors need all the help we can give them these days, particularly those who are doing without daily.....any boost is helpful, and this bill addresses some important needs.

Thanks for your consideration,

Mary La Fever
41 year resident of Anchorage

Matthew Johnson

From: Britteny Cioni-Haywood [britteny.cioni@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 12:08 PM
To: Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. John Coghill; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Lindsey Holmes
Subject: HB126

Dear Members of the Health and Social Services Committee,
I am writing in support of the HB126 bill that is currently be reviewed and voted on this week. It is my understanding that approximately 40% of Alaska's foster youth end up homeless after coming out of foster care, and less than 10% end up going to college. This is not acceptable and we need to provide more support for those coming out of the foster care system. If we want productive, capable adults then let's help this group overcome the many obstacles that they face. Really the costs of this program will far outweigh the costs of doing nothing and putting this population in greater risk of ending up in the penal system or on social programs that will be much more costly over a lifetime. The loss of economic potential is enormous and we need to help these young adults become productive citizens of our state. Thank you for time and consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,
Britteny A. Cioni
9093 Fireweed Lane
Juneau, AK 99801

4/13/2009

Matthew Johnson

From: m.langdon@gci.net on behalf of Mary Langdon [m.langdon@gci.net]
Sent: Saturday, April 11, 2009 11:02 AM
To: Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. John Coghill; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Lindsey Holmes
Cc: Rep. Les Gara
Subject: House Bill 126 "Success For Foster Youth"

Dear Representatives~ I am writing to strongly encourage all of you, as members of the House Health and Social Services committee, to vote to pass HB 126. I have read the sponsor statement. I can see only good coming from passing this bill, for individuals and for the State of Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,
Mary Langdon, M.D.

4/13/2009

4647

Matthew Johnson

From: Patricia Abney [abney1@acsalaska.net]
Sent: Saturday, April 11, 2009 10:37 AM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: HB 126

Please support House Bill 126
It is so important that these young people become productive adults and not life
long wards of the state.
I think Amanda says it well.

Amanda Metivier, who helped found Alaska's foster care advocacy and education
organization, Facing Foster Care in Alaska, notes the effort aims to:

***"create opportunities for young people who age-out of foster care to succeed in their
adult lives by providing job training, higher education, housing assistance, and school
stability. It gives hope to foster youth who have limited supports and resources after
leaving custody."***

Sincerely,

Pat Abney

4/13/2009

4648

Matthew Johnson

From: Friedman_Jeff [Friedman_Jeff@asdk12.org]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2009 9:28 AM
To: Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. John Coghill; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Paul Seaton;
Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Lindsey Holmes
Cc: Rep. Les Gara; Comeau_Carol; Siegfried_Robin
Subject: HB 126 Homeless Students

Dear Co-Chairs Herron and Keller, and Committee Members:

I am writing about CSHB 126 which will be heard by the House Health and Social Services Committee on Tuesday.

The Anchorage School District continues to support this bill, but some of the changes made by the Committee Substitute raise concerns.

1. The Committee Substitute added a provision requiring transportation during summer school. In the past, we have not provided transportation during summer school except for some of our Title I schools. Not all homeless students have a Title I school as their school of origin. In addition, not all schools of origin will be open during summer school. On its face, this language would require us to transport a homeless student to his or her school of origin even if the school of origin was closed for the summer.

Keeping a student in their school of origin during the regular school year is important. Keeping a student in the same school is less important during summer school because the teachers are different, the students in the school are different, and the curriculum is different. I ask that this new requirement be removed from the bill.

2. The Committee Substitute also removed a provision that currently exists in law and was in the original bill. That provision allowed for a waiver of the transportation requirement if the Superintendent found, in writing, that attending a different school was in the child's best interest. An example of when this waiver might be used is when a homeless child is living with relatives and the homeless student might be better off attending school with the other children in that household. A waiver could also be useful in a district like Kenai where it might not be in the student's best interest to be transported from Seward to the student's school of origin in Homer each day. Please re-insert the waiver provision that was in the original bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Friedman
Anchorage School Board
1534 D Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-742-4699 (Home)

Matthew Johnson

From: Friedman_Jeff [Friedman_Jeff@asdk12.org]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2009 5:55 PM
To: Friedman_Jeff; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. John Coghill; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Lindsey Holmes
Cc: Rep. Les Gara; Comeau_Carol; Siegfried_Robin; Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: RE: HB 126 Homeless Students

Follow Up Flag: Follow Up
Flag Status: Red

I have received new information about this bill and wish to clarify my earlier e-mail. I have learned that a C version will be introduced that will eliminate the second concern listed below. In addition, I have learned from the sponsor that the reference to summer school is expected to be removed before this bill is finalized. With this new information, I can say that I fully support HB 126 and urge you to move it out of committee with a favorable recommendation. I apologize for any confusion my initial e-mail may have caused.

Jeff Friedman
Anchorage School Board
1534 D Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-742-4699 (Home)

From: Friedman_Jeff
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2009 9:27 AM
To: Representative_bob_herron@legis.state.ak.us;
Representative_wes_keller@legis.state.ak.us;
Representative_john_coghill@legis.state.ak.us; representative_bob_lynn@legis.state.ak.us;
representative_paul_seaton@legis.state.ak.us;
representative_sharon_cissna@legis.state.ak.us;
representative_lindsey_holmes@legis.state.ak.us
Cc: representative_les_gara@legis.state.ak.us; Comeau_Carol; Siegfried_Robin
Subject: HB 126 Homeless Students

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Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Friedman
Anchorage School Board
1534 D Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-742-4699 (Home)

Matthew Johnson

From: David-----Mikell [alaskamd@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, April 11, 2009 7:57 AM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: HB 126

As a former foster parent and high school teacher of many teenagers in foster care, I STRONGLY urge you to support the passage of HB 126. Our teenagers need more than the resources and assistance that are currently available to them in order to successfully transition from foster care to independent adulthood.

Thank you,
Mikell L. Murphy, Ed.D
2053 Cliffside Dr.
Anchorage, AK 999501