

HB

126

26-LS0309\O
Mischel
3/30/10

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**

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to residential shelters for runaway minors; and relating to extensions**
2 **of state custody of children."**

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) two-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
12 beyond the person's 21st birthday if the continued custody is in the best
13 interests of the person and the person consents to it [ONE-YEAR
14 EXTENSIONS OF COMMITMENT THAT DO NOT EXTEND BEYOND

1 THE CHILD'S 19TH BIRTHDAY IF THE EXTENSION IS IN THE BEST
2 INTERESTS OF THE CHILD]; and

3 (B) an additional [ONE-YEAR] period of state custody past 19
4 years of age or, if the person is emancipated, past the date of emancipation,
5 that does not extend beyond the person's 21st birthday, if the resumption
6 of [CONTINUED] state custody is in the best interests of the person and the
7 person

8 (i) consents to it;

9 (ii) was placed in out-of-home care by the
10 department immediately before being released from state custody,
11 if the person was released for a reason other than court-ordered
12 reunification with the person's parent; and

13 (iii) is in need of out-of-home care to avoid personal
14 harm, homelessness, or economic hardship, or to enhance the
15 person's ability to continue the person's education or training or
16 otherwise improve the person's successful transition to
17 independent living;

18 (2) order the child released to a parent, adult family member, or
19 guardian of the child or to another suitable person, and, in appropriate cases, order the
20 parent, adult family member, guardian, or other person to provide medical or other
21 care and treatment; if the court releases the child, it shall direct the department to
22 supervise the care and treatment given to the child, but the court may dispense with
23 the department's supervision if the court finds that the adult to whom the child is
24 released will adequately care for the child without supervision; the department's
25 supervision may not exceed two years or in any event extend past the date the child
26 reaches 19 years of age, except that the department or the child's guardian ad litem
27 may petition for and the court may grant in a hearing

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

31 (B) an additional one-year period of supervision past 19 years

1 of age if the continued supervision is in the best interests of the person and the
2 person consents to it; or

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

8 * Sec. 2. AS 47.10.310 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 (e) A program for runaway minors that operates a licensed residential shelter
10 in the state shall provide a shelter with a capacity designated in the license issued
11 under AS 47.10.300 - 47.10.390.

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

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

14 (A) under 18 years of age;

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

18 (C) under 21 years of age if that person is living in out-of-
19 home care as defined in AS 47.14.900;

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE KELLER

TO: CSHB 126(), Draft Version "O"

1 Page 2, line 12:

2 Delete "and"

3 Insert "in this sub-subparagraph, "parent" means a biological or adoptive parent
4 or a legal guardian of the person;"

5

6 Page 2, line 14:

7 Delete "harm, homelessness, or economic hardship,"

8 Insert "harm or homelessness"

9

10 Page 2, line 17, following "living;":

11 Insert "and

12 (iv) if requested by the department, agrees to
13 reasonable terms for resuming state custody that may include
14 matters relating to the person's education, attainment of a job or
15 life skills, or other terms found by the court to be reasonable and in
16 the person's best interest;"

17

18 Page 3, line 19:

19 Delete "AS 47.14.900"

20 Insert "AS 47.14.400"

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE KELLER

TO: CSHB 126(), Draft Version "O"

1 Page 1, line 1:

2 Delete "and"

3

4 Page 1, line 2, following "children":

5 Insert "; and providing for an effective date"

6

7 Page 3, following line 19:

8 Insert a new bill section to read:

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

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSHB126(HSS)
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-FCSN-04-01-10 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 Required	Information						
		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		93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		93.6	0.0	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6

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

	FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
1002 Federal Receipts	5.5		5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
1003 GF Match	88.1		88.1	88.1	88.1	88.1	88.1
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	93.6	0.0	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6	93.6

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 improve outcomes for youth that are preparing to transition out of state custody and their foster care settings into independent living situations by extending the time they may remain in state custody and allowing for opportunities to re-enter state custody after they have exited 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 extraordinary clothing, family vacations, biological family visitation, medical costs that fall outside of Medicaid.

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

Phone 465-3191
Date/Time 4/1/10 1:00 PM

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

Date 4/1/2010

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The following assumptions have been applied:

1. OCS successfully implements all federal program requirements to extend foster care to age 21.
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. These youth are included in the calculations provided below.
3. The number of youth who turn age 18 will remain somewhat consistent from year to year. No consideration has been included in this note for a possible influx of youth into the program extension during the first year of implementation.
4. Calculations are based on full time equivalents (FTEs) to account for youth who move in and out of the program for varying reasons.
5. FTEs are a simple estimate based on the unsupported assumptions that 10% of the number of FTE youth currently in care ages 18, 19, and 20, will remain in foster care (34 FTE youth).
6. Excluding youth already in extended care because of special needs, 6 FTE special needs children ages 18, 19, and 20 will remain in care longer, bringing the annual FTE count to 40.
7. Calculations use the average cost per child for special needs items.
8. The foster care penetration rate and the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage will remain somewhat stable.
9. 66% percent of the youth who remain in care will pursue secondary education and thus remain within the requirements of the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and eligible for IV-E federal reimbursement.

Estimated cost per FTE = \$2,340.00 annually x 40 FTEs = \$93,600. Federal reimbursement for these costs is estimated at 5.4% or \$5,540.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: CSHB126(HSS)
 () Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-CSM-04-01-10 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								
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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 CS HB126 (HSS) is to improve outcomes for youth that are preparing to transition out of state custody and their foster care settings into independent living situations by extending the time they may remain in state custody and allowing for opportunities to re-enter state custody after they have exited 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. The following provides the estimated cost of ORCA updates that will be required to implement this bill.

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

Phone 465-3191
 Date/Time 4/1/10 1:00 PM

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

Date 4/1/2010

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB126(HSS)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Requirement	Functional LOE (hours)	Development LOE (hours)	Total LOE (hours)	Cost
Update Services page for new services.	120	80	200	\$22,000.00
Update Education page with post-secondary educational institutions.	80	60	140	\$15,400.00
Update OHP for unlicensed independent living service categories and service types.	120	80	200	\$22,000.00
Update OHP for licensed service categories and service types over 18.	120	100	220	\$24,200.00
Update Ref Value for age change from 18 to 21	80	60	140	\$15,400.00
Update Eligibility page calculations for new age requirement.	180	160	340	\$37,400.00
Update Medicaid Eligibility page calculations for new page	180	160	340	\$37,400.00
Visitation Report	40	36	76	\$8,360.000
Batch updates for OHP and Eligibility	40	160	200	\$22,000.00
Days:	960/8 = 120 days	896/8 = 112 days	1856/8 = 232 total days	Total Estimate \$204,160.00

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSHB126(HSS)
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(HSS)-DHSS-04-01-10 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.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims	508.0		508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	508.0	0.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES (
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	84.3		84.3	84.3	84.3	84.3	84.3	84.3
1003 GF Match	423.7		423.7	423.7	423.7	423.7	423.7	423.7
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	508.0	0.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0	508.0

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 improve outcomes for youth that are preparing to transition out of state custody and their foster care settings into independent living situations by extending the time they may remain in state custody and allowing for opportunities to re-enter state custody after they have exited foster care.

This fiscal note addresses increased foster care base rate reimbursements to providers for youth who remain in foster care beyond age 18.

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

Phone 465-3191
Date/Time 4/1/2010 10:00 PM

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

Date 4/1/2010

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The following assumptions have been applied:

- 1) OCS successfully implements all federal program requirements to extend foster care to age 21.
- 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. These youth are included in the calculations provided below.
- 3) The number of youth who turn age 18 will remain somewhat consistent from year to year. No consideration has been included in this note for a possible influx of youth into the program extension during the first year of implementation.
- 4) Calculations are based on full time equivalents (FTEs) to account for youth who move in and out of the program for varying reasons.
- 5) FTEs are a simple estimate based on the unsupported assumptions that 10% of the number of FTE youth currently in care ages 18, 19, and 20, will remain in foster care (34 FTE youth).
- 6) Excluding youth already in extended care because of special needs, 6 FTE special needs children ages 18, 19, and 20 will remain in care longer, bringing the annual FTE count to 40.
- 7) Calculations use 360 days at an average daily rate of \$35.33 per day.
- 8) The foster care penetration rate and the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage will remain somewhat stable.
- 9) 66% percent of the youth who remain in care will pursue secondary education and thus remain within the requirements of the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and eligible for IV-E federal reimbursement.

Fiscal Year	FTEs	Annual Cost per/FTE	Est. FFP	Total Annual Est. Cost	Federal Funds	General Funds
2011	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7
2012	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7
2013	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7
2014	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7
2015	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7
2016	40	\$12.7	16.59%	\$508.0	\$84.3	\$423.7

A M E N D M E N T

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSHB 126(EDC), Draft Version "P"

1 Page 1, line 9, through page 2, line 2:

2 Delete all material and insert:

3 "Except as provided in (b) and (d) of this section and notwithstanding the availability
4 of federal funding, the governing body of a school district shall comply with the requirements
5 for continuing the education of a homeless student under 42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(3)(A) and (B)
6 and 11432(g)(5)(A) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of
7 2001), as those provisions existed on February 1, 2009, for the remainder of the school year,
8 or, if the student is attending school for a summer term, for the remainder of the summer
9 term."

10

11 Page 2, following line 13:

12 Insert a new subsection to read:

13 "(e) Nothing in this section is intended to limit a school district's compliance
14 with 42 U.S.C. 11431 - 11435 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance
15 Improvement Act of 2001) or to require the hiring of additional personnel if the school
16 district is receiving federal funding under that Act."

17

18 Reletter the following subsection accordingly.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE
TO: CSHB 126(EDC)

1 Page 11, following line 10:

2 Insert a new bill section to read:

3 **"* Sec. 18.** AS 47.32.160 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

4 (c) A nonprofit organization that, and a person acting on behalf of the
5 organization who, engages in recruitment activities for foster homes that become
6 licensed under this chapter may not be held liable for the consequences of the
7 recruitment."

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE
TO: CSHB 126(EDC)

BY REPRESENTATIVE GARA

1 Page 1, line 8, through page 2, line 5:

2 Delete all material and insert:

3 "Sec. 14.03.096. Continuing the public education of a homeless student. (a)
4 Except as provided in (b) and (d) of this section, the governing body of a school
5 district shall, consistent with the student's best interest, provide transportation services
6 and coordinate with the Department of Health and Social Services the continuation of
7 the public education of a homeless student in the student's school of origin for the
8 remainder of the current school year or, if the student is attending school for a summer
9 term, for the remainder of the summer term.

10 (b) The requirements in (a) of this section do not apply if the student
11 moves to a school district other than the school district in which the student's school of
12 origin is located."

13

14 Page 2, following line 13:

15 Insert new subsections to read:

16 "(e) A school district shall promote a homeless student's best interest by

17 (1) except when requested by the student or the student's legal
18 guardian, maintaining the enrollment of the homeless student in the student's school of
19 origin;

20 (2) providing a written explanation that includes an appeal procedure
21 for a decision that removes a homeless student from the student's school of origin; and

22 (3) considering the views of the homeless student and the student's
23 legal guardian.

1 (f) A school district shall designate a liaison between the school district and
 2 the homeless student and the student's legal guardian to coordinate compliance with
 3 this section.

4 (g) Nothing in this section is intended to supersede the applicable
 5 requirements of 42 U.S.C. 11431 - 11435 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
 6 Assistance Improvement Act of 2001) or to require the hiring of additional personnel."
 7

8 Reletter the following subsection accordingly.

9
 10 Page 2, lines 15 - 20:

11 Delete all material and insert:

12 "(1) "homeless student" means a person under 19 years of age who is
 13 in a state of homelessness for lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime
 14 residence that is intended to serve as a permanent home; "homelessness" includes

15 (A) placement in an emergency shelter;

16 (B) placement in out-of-home care as defined under
 17 AS 47.14.400;

18 (C) placement in transient housing; and

19 (D) the period in which a student is awaiting placement in out-
 20 of-home care as defined under AS 47.14.400."
 21

22 Page 9, following line 10:

23 Insert a new bill section to read:

24 **** Sec. 9.** AS 47.10.080(c) is amended to read:

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

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

30 (A) one-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
 31 beyond the child's 19th birthday if the extension is in the best interests of the

1 child; and

2 (B) one-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
 3 beyond the child's 21st birthday [AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIOD
 4 OF STATE CUSTODY PAST 19 YEARS OF AGE] if the continued state
 5 custody is in the best interests of the person and the person consents to it;

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

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

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

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

27
 28 Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

29
 30 Page 9, line 11:

31 Delete "a new subsection"

1 Insert "new subsections"

2

3 Page 9, lines 18 - 19:

4 Delete "the department or the department's contractors"

5 Insert "the department's employees or contractors"

6

7 Page 9, following line 20:

8 Insert a new subsection to read:

9 "(w) The department shall

10 (1) notify the governing body of a school district and the principal of the
11 school in which a student who is in the custody of the department is enrolled of a
12 change in the placement of the student if the placement is outside of the attendance
13 boundaries of the school; and

14 (2) assist the district in complying with the requirements of AS 14.03.096."

15

16 Page 11, line 1:

17 Delete "receiving services under the program"

18 Insert "eligible for services under the program who has left out-of-home care"

19

20 Page 11, line 2:

21 Delete "less"

22 Insert "more"

23

24 Page 11, line 4:

25 Delete "after the individual leaves out-of-home care"

26 Insert "and shall end before the individual is 23 years of age"

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSHB 126(), Draft Version "C"

1 Page 12, line 26, through page 13, line 1:

2 Delete all material and insert:

3 **"Sec. 47.18.335. Monetary living expense stipend.** (a) The department shall
4 provide a monthly monetary living expense stipend for a period not to exceed nine
5 months in an amount described in (b) of this section to an individual who

6 (1) has left out-of-home care at age 18 or older;

7 (2) is participating in services in the program; and

8 (3) has monthly contact with a social worker involved in the program.

9 (b) A stipend provided under this section shall be in an amount necessary to
10 meet an eligible individual's living expense as determined by the department. The
11 amount may not exceed

12 (1) for the first six months of eligibility, the daily rate provided to a
13 licensed foster parent; or

14 (2) for a period not to exceed three additional months during the period
15 that follows the first six months of eligibility, half of the daily rate provided to a
16 licensed foster parent.

17 (c) The department shall pay the stipend provided under this section until the
18 later of the date that the individual

19 (1) reaches 21 years of age; or

20 (2) has left out-of-home care for six months.

21 (d) The department may adopt regulations to implement this section."

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE GARA

TO: CSHB 126(), Draft Version "C"

1 Page 13, following line 6:

2 Insert a new bill section to read:

3 **"* Sec. 19. AS 47.32.160 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:**

4 (c) A nonprofit organization that, and a person acting on behalf of the
5 organization who, engages in recruitment activities for foster homes that become
6 licensed under this chapter may not be held liable for the consequences of the
7 recruitment."

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSHB 126(), Draft Version "C"

1 Page 1, line 10, following "shall,":

2 Insert "to the extent feasible and"

3

4 Page 1, line 13, through page 2, line 1:

5 Delete "or, if the student is attending school for a summer term, for the remainder of
6 the summer term"

7

8 Page 3, line 19, following "available":

9 Insert "subsidized"

10

11 Page 3, line 23:

12 Delete "commission"

13 Insert "institution"

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE HSS
COMMITTEE

BY _____

TO: WORK DRAFT CSHB 126() \ 26-LS0309C

- 1 Page 11, line 5, following "placement.", through line 7:
- 2 Delete "Nothing in this paragraph creates a private right of action against the
- 3 department's employees or contractors."

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 126()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GARA, Crawford, Kerttula, Gardner, Harris, Foster, Edgmon, Muñoz

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to continuing the secondary public education of a homeless student;**
2 **relating to the purpose of certain laws as they relate to children; relating to tuition**
3 **waivers, loans, and medical assistance for a child placed in out-of-home care by the**
4 **state; relating to foster care; relating to children in need of aid; and relating to out-of-**
5 **home care transition to independent living."**

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

7 *** Section 1. AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:**

8 **Sec. 14.03.096. Continuing the public education of a homeless student. (a)**
9 **Except as provided in (b) and (d) of this section, the governing body of a school**
10 **district shall, consistent with the student's best interest, provide transportation services**
11 **and coordinate with the Department of Health and Social Services the continuation of**
12 **the public education of a homeless student in the student's school of origin for the**
13 **remainder of the current school year or, if the student is attending school for a summer**

1 term, for the remainder of the summer term.

2 (b) The requirements in (a) of this section do not apply if the student moves to
3 a school district other than the school district in which the student's school of origin is
4 located.

5 (c) If a homeless student is transferred to a school other than the student's
6 school of origin, the school of origin shall provide a copy of the student's records to
7 the student's new school within seven school days after notification of the transfer.
8 The student's new school shall allow the student to attend school while awaiting the
9 transfer of records under this subsection.

10 (d) A school district is required to comply with this section only

11 (1) if the legislature appropriates funds for the purpose; and

12 (2) to the extent possible using funds appropriated for the purpose.

13 (e) A school district shall promote a homeless student's best interest by

14 (1) except when requested by the student or the student's legal
15 guardian, maintaining the enrollment of the homeless student in the student's school of
16 origin;

17 (2) providing a written explanation that includes an appeal procedure
18 for a decision that removes a homeless student from the student's school of origin; and

19 (3) considering the views of the homeless student and the student's
20 legal guardian.

21 (f) A school district shall designate a liaison between the school district and
22 the homeless student and the student's legal guardian to coordinate compliance with
23 this section.

24 (g) Nothing in this section is intended to supersede the applicable
25 requirements of 42 U.S.C. 11431 - 11435 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
26 Assistance Improvement Act of 2001) or to require the hiring of additional personnel.

27 (h) In this section,

28 (1) "homeless student" means a person under 19 years of age who is in
29 a state of homelessness for lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
30 that is intended to serve as a permanent home; "homelessness" includes

31 (A) placement in an emergency shelter;

1 (B) placement in out-of-home care as defined under
2 AS 47.14.400;

3 (C) placement in transient housing; and

4 (D) the period in which a student is awaiting placement in out-
5 of-home care as defined under AS 47.14.400;

6 (2) "school of origin" means the school in which the student was last
7 enrolled.

8 * Sec. 2. AS 14.43 is amended by adding a new section to read:

9 **Article 3A. Free Tuition for a Person Who Was in Out-of-Home Care.**

10 **Sec. 14.43.086. Free tuition and fees for a person who was in out-of-home**
11 **care.** (a) A person who enrolls as a student in good standing in a state-supported
12 educational institution in the state is entitled to a waiver of tuition, fees, and room and
13 board expenses if the person provides adequate proof that the person

14 (1) was in the custody of the state under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14;

15 (2) was placed in out-of-home care for a period of not less than six
16 consecutive months on or after the person became 16 years of age;

17 (3) has applied for educational grants or scholarships that the person is
18 otherwise eligible for as recommended by the educational institution;

19 (4) has applied for an available federal education loan; and

20 (5) is under 29 years of age.

21 (b) The amount of the waiver to which a person is entitled under this section is
22 the amount of unmet need for tuition, room, and board expenses, as determined by the
23 commission, after deducting funding for the school year from education loans, grants,
24 or scholarships received by a person eligible for a waiver.

25 (c) The proceeds of an education loan, grant, or scholarship received by a
26 person eligible for a waiver under this section must be paid to the educational
27 institution to offset the person's tuition, fees, and room and board expenses.

28 (d) A state-supported educational institution in the state is required to provide
29 a waiver under (a) of this section only if the legislature appropriates funds for the
30 purpose of offsetting waivers under this section. If an appropriation is not sufficient to
31 fully offset waivers for each person entitled to a waiver under (a) of this section, the

1 institution may offer full or partial waivers to eligible applicants as funding permits
2 and at the discretion of the institution.

3 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.43.160 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

4 (7) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

5 * **Sec. 4.** AS 36.30.850(b)(42) is amended to read:

6 (42) grants and contracts with qualified entities for services under
7 AS 47.18.330 for the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition program;

8 * **Sec. 5.** AS 47.05.060 is amended to read:

9 **Sec. 47.05.060. Purpose and policy relating to children.** The purpose of this
10 title as it relates to children is to secure for each child the care and guidance,
11 preferably in the child's own home, as well as an education, that will serve the moral,
12 emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical welfare of the child and the best interests
13 of the community; to preserve and strengthen the child's family ties unless efforts to
14 preserve and strengthen the ties are likely to result in physical or emotional damage to
15 the child, removing the child from the custody of the parents only as a last resort when
16 the child's welfare or safety or the protection of the public cannot be adequately
17 safeguarded without removal; and, when the child is removed from the family, to
18 secure for the child adequate custody, education, and care and adequate planning for
19 permanent placement of the child.

20 * **Sec. 6.** AS 47.05.065 is amended to read:

21 **Sec. 47.05.065. Legislative findings related to children.** The legislature finds
22 that

23 (1) parents have the following rights and responsibilities relating to the
24 care and control of their child while the child is a minor:

25 (A) the responsibility to provide the child with food, clothing,
26 shelter, education, and medical care;

27 (B) the right and responsibility to protect, nurture, train, and
28 discipline the child, including the right to direct the child's medical care and
29 the right to exercise reasonable corporal discipline;

30 (C) the right to determine where and with whom the child shall
31 live;

1 (D) the right and responsibility to make decisions of legal or
2 financial significance concerning the child;

3 (E) the right to obtain representation for the child in legal
4 actions; and

5 (F) the responsibility to provide special safeguards and care,
6 including appropriate prenatal and postnatal protection for the child;

7 (2) it is the policy of the state to strengthen families and to protect
8 children from child abuse and neglect; the state recognizes that, in some cases,
9 protection of a child may require removal of the child from the child's home; however,

10 (A) except in those cases involving serious risk to a child's
11 health or safety, the Department of Health and Social Services should provide
12 time-limited family support services to the child and the child's family in order
13 to offer parents the opportunity to remedy parental conduct or conditions in the
14 home that placed the child at risk of harm so that a child may return home
15 safely and permanently; and

16 (B) the state also recognizes that when a child is removed from
17 the home, visitation between the child and the child's parents or guardian and
18 family members reduces the trauma for the child and enhances the likelihood
19 that the child will be able to return home; therefore, whenever a child is
20 removed from the parental home, the Department of Health and Social
21 Services should encourage frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation of the
22 child with the child's parent or guardian and family members;

23 (3) it is the policy of the state to recognize that, when a child is a ward
24 of the state, the child is entitled to reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate
25 treatment and that the Department of Health and Social Services as legal custodian and
26 the child's guardian ad litem as guardian of the child's best interests and their agents
27 and assignees, each should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the child is provided
28 with reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate treatment for the duration of time
29 that the child is a ward of the state;

30 (4) it is in the best interests of a child who has been removed from the
31 child's own home for the state to apply the following principles in resolving the

1 situation:

2 (A) the child should be placed in a safe, secure, and stable
3 environment;

4 (B) the child should not be moved unnecessarily;

5 (C) a planning process should be followed to lead to permanent
6 placement of the child;

7 (D) every effort should be made to encourage psychological
8 attachment between the adult caregiver and the child;

9 (E) frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation with the parent
10 or guardian and family members should be encouraged; [AND]

11 (F) parents and guardians must actively participate in family
12 support services so as to facilitate the child's being able to remain in the home;
13 when children are removed from the home, the parents and guardians must
14 actively participate in family support services to make return of their children
15 to the home possible; and

16 (G) the child should continue to attend the child's school of
17 origin as provided under AS 14.03.096;

18 (5) numerous studies establish that

19 (A) children undergo a critical attachment process before the
20 time they reach six years of age;

21 (B) a child who has not attached with an adult caregiver during
22 this critical stage will suffer significant emotional damage that frequently leads
23 to chronic psychological problems and antisocial behavior when the child
24 reaches adolescence and adulthood; and

25 (C) it is important to provide for an expedited placement
26 procedure to ensure that all children, especially those under the age of six
27 years, who have been removed from their homes are placed in permanent
28 homes expeditiously.

29 * Sec. 7. AS 47.07.020(b) is amended to read:

30 (b) In addition to the persons specified in (a) of this section, the following
31 optional groups of persons for whom the state may claim federal financial

1 participation are eligible for medical assistance:

2 (1) persons eligible for but not receiving assistance under any plan of
3 the state approved under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act,
4 Supplemental Security Income) or a federal program designated as the successor to the
5 aid to families with dependent children program;

6 (2) persons in a general hospital, skilled nursing facility, or
7 intermediate care facility, who, if they left the facility, would be eligible for assistance
8 under one of the federal programs specified in (1) of this subsection;

9 (3) persons under 21 years of age who are under supervision of the
10 department, for whom maintenance is being paid in whole or in part from public
11 funds, and who are in out-of-home care [FOSTER HOMES] or private child-care
12 institutions;

13 (4) aged, blind, or disabled persons, who, because they do not meet
14 income and resources requirements, do not receive supplemental security income
15 under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act), and who do not
16 receive a mandatory state supplement, but who are eligible, or would be eligible if
17 they were not in a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility to receive an
18 optional state supplementary payment;

19 (5) persons under 21 years of age who are in an institution designated
20 as an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded and who are financially
21 eligible as determined by the standards of the federal program designated as the
22 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

23 (6) persons in a medical or intermediate care facility whose income
24 while in the facility does not exceed \$1,656 a month but who would not be eligible for
25 an optional state supplementary payment if they left the hospital or other facility;

26 (7) persons under 21 years of age who are receiving active treatment in
27 a psychiatric hospital and who are financially eligible as determined by the standards
28 of the federal program designated as the successor to the aid to families with
29 dependent children program;

30 (8) persons under 21 years of age and not covered under (a) of this
31 section [,] who would be eligible for benefits under the federal program designated as

1 the successor to the aid to families with dependent children program, except that they
2 have the care and support of both their natural and adoptive parents;

3 (9) pregnant women not covered under (a) of this section and who
4 meet the income and resource requirements of the federal program designated as the
5 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

6 (10) persons under 21 years of age not covered under (a) of this section
7 who the department has determined cannot be placed for adoption without medical
8 assistance because of a special need for medical or rehabilitative care and who the
9 department has determined are hard-to-place children eligible for subsidy under
10 AS 25.23.190 - 25.23.210;

11 (11) persons who can be considered under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(3) (Title
12 XIX, Social Security Act, Medical Assistance) to be individuals with respect to whom
13 a supplemental security income is being paid under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title
14 XVI, Social Security Act) because they meet all of the following criteria:

15 (A) they are 18 years of age or younger and qualify as disabled
16 individuals under 42 U.S.C. 1382c(a) (Title XVI, Social Security Act);

17 (B) the department has determined that

18 (i) they require a level of care provided in a hospital,
19 nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded;

20 (ii) it is appropriate to provide their care outside of an
21 institution; and

22 (iii) the estimated amount that would be spent for
23 medical assistance for their individual care outside an institution is not
24 greater than the estimated amount that would otherwise be expended
25 individually for medical assistance within an appropriate institution;

26 (C) if they were in a medical institution, they would be eligible
27 for medical assistance under other provisions of this chapter; and

28 (D) home and community-based services under a waiver
29 approved by the federal government are either not available to them under this
30 chapter or would be inappropriate for them;

31 (12) disabled persons, as described in 42 U.S.C.

1 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XIII), who are in families whose income, as determined under
2 applicable federal regulations or guidelines, is less than 250 percent of the official
3 poverty line applicable to a family of that size according to the United States
4 Department of Health and Human Services, and who, but for earnings in excess of the
5 limit established under 42 U.S.C. 1396d(q)(2)(B), would be considered to be
6 individuals with respect to whom a supplemental security income is being paid under
7 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c; a person eligible for assistance under this paragraph who is
8 not eligible under another provision of this section shall pay a premium or other cost-
9 sharing charges according to a sliding fee scale that is based on income as established
10 by the department in regulations;

11 (13) persons under 19 years of age who are not covered under (a) of
12 this section and whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal
13 poverty line as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human
14 Services and revised under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

15 (14) pregnant women who are not covered under (a) of this section and
16 whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty line as
17 defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and revised
18 under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

19 (15) persons who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer
20 and who are eligible for coverage under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XVIII);

21 (16) persons under 21 years of age who were in the custody of the
22 department under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14 and who were placed in out-of-home
23 care for a period of not less than six consecutive months on or after reaching 16
24 years of age.

25 * Sec. 8. AS 47.07.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

26 (o) In this section, "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

27 * Sec. 9. AS 47.10.080(c) is amended to read:

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

29 (1) order the child committed to the department for placement in an
30 appropriate setting for a period of time not to exceed two years or in any event not to
31 extend past the date the child becomes 19 years of age, except that the department or

1 the child's guardian ad litem may petition for and the court may grant in a hearing

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

5 (B) one-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
6 beyond the child's 21st birthday [AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIOD
7 OF STATE CUSTODY PAST 19 YEARS OF AGE] if the continued state
8 custody is in the best interests of the person and the person consents to it;

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

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

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

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

30 * Sec. 10. AS 47.10.080 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

31 (v) A social worker employed by or under contract with the department shall,

1 not less than monthly, conduct visits with a child committed to the custody of the
 2 department under (c) of this section. The visits must be of sufficient substance and
 3 duration to address issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the
 4 child's safety, permanency, and well-being. The majority of the visits conducted under
 5 this subsection must be at the location of the child's current placement. Nothing in this
 6 paragraph creates a private right of action against the department's employees or
 7 contractors. In this subsection, "visit" means face-to-face contact between social
 8 worker and child.

9 (w) The department shall

10 (1) notify the governing body of a school district and the principal of
 11 the school in which a student who is in the custody of the department is enrolled of a
 12 change in the placement of the student if the placement is outside of the attendance
 13 boundaries of the school; and

14 (2) assist the district in complying with the requirements of
 15 AS 14.03.096.

16 * Sec. 11. AS 47.10.990(3) is amended to read:

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

18 (A) under 18 years of age;

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

22 (C) under 21 years of age if that person is living in out-of-
 23 home care;

24 * Sec. 12. AS 47.10.990 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

25 (33) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

26 * Sec. 13. AS 47.18.300(a) is amended to read:

27 (a) The department, in coordination with local public and private agencies,
 28 shall design, develop, and implement an out-of-home care [A FOSTER CARE]
 29 transition program to provide support and services to individuals who

30 (1) reach or have reached the age of 16 or older while in state custody
 31 and placed in out-of-home [FOSTER] care and have not yet reached 23 years of age;

1 and

2 (2) meet other eligibility criteria established by the department under
3 (b) of this section.

4 * Sec. 14. AS 47.18.310 is amended to read:

5 **Sec. 47.18.310. Program design.** The department, in coordination with local
6 public and private agencies, shall design the program as a continuation of the training
7 efforts related to independent living skills that were initiated for a child in state
8 custody who was placed in out-of-home care and [WHEN THE STATE FOSTER
9 CARE RECIPIENTS WERE] identified as being likely to remain in out-of-home
10 [STATE FOSTER] care until reaching not less than the age of 18. The program
11 design must require that program participants are directly involved in identifying the
12 program activities that will prepare them for independent living.

13 * Sec. 15. AS 47.18.320(a) is amended to read:

14 (a) Subject to the availability of an appropriation made for the purposes of
15 AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390, the program may provide

- 16 (1) education and vocational training;
17 (2) assistance in obtaining basic education and training;
18 (3) career and employment services;
19 (4) training in basic life skills;
20 (5) housing and utility assistance;
21 (6) mentoring and counseling; and
22 (7) other appropriate services to complement the efforts of former state

23 foster care recipients or a child who was in state custody and placed in out-of-
24 home care to achieve self-sufficiency.

25 * Sec. 16. AS 47.18 is amended by adding a new section to read:

26 **Sec. 47.18.335. Monetary living expense stipend.** The department shall
27 provide to an individual eligible for services under the program who has left out-of-
28 home care a monthly stipend in an amount that is necessary to meet an individual's
29 living expenses as determined by the department and that is not more than the daily
30 rate provided to a licensed foster parent. The stipend shall continue for a period of not
31 more than one year and shall end before the individual is 23 years of age. The

1 department may adopt regulations to implement this section.

2 * Sec. 17. AS 47.18.390(1) is amended to read:

3 (1) "program" means the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition
4 program authorized under AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390;

5 * Sec. 18. AS 47.18.390(3) is repealed and reenacted to read:

6 (3) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

26-LS0309\T
Mischel
4/15/09

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 126(HSS)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Offered:
Referred:**

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

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to continuing the secondary public education of a homeless student;**
2 **relating to the purpose of certain laws as they relate to children; relating to tuition**
3 **waivers, loans, and medical assistance for a child placed in out-of-home care by the**
4 **state; relating to foster care; relating to children in need of aid; and relating to out-of-**
5 **home care transition to independent living."**

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

7 *** Section 1.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

8 **Sec. 14.03.096. Continuing the public education of a homeless student. (a)**
9 Except as provided in (b) and (d) of this section, the governing body of a school
10 district shall, to the extent feasible and consistent with the student's best interest,
11 provide transportation services and coordinate with the Department of Health and
12 Social Services the continuation of the public education of a homeless student in the
13 student's school of origin for the remainder of the current school year.

1 (b) The requirements in (a) of this section do not apply if the student moves to
2 a school district other than the school district in which the student's school of origin is
3 located.

4 (c) If a homeless student is transferred to a school other than the student's
5 school of origin, the school of origin shall provide a copy of the student's records to
6 the student's new school within seven school days after notification of the transfer.
7 The student's new school shall allow the student to attend school while awaiting the
8 transfer of records under this subsection.

9 (d) A school district is required to comply with this section only

10 (1) if the legislature appropriates funds for the purpose; and

11 (2) to the extent possible using funds appropriated for the purpose.

12 (e) A school district shall promote a homeless student's best interest by

13 (1) except when requested by the student or the student's legal
14 guardian, maintaining the enrollment of the homeless student in the student's school of
15 origin;

16 (2) providing a written explanation that includes an appeal procedure
17 for a decision that removes a homeless student from the student's school of origin; and

18 (3) considering the views of the homeless student and the student's
19 legal guardian.

20 (f) A school district shall designate a liaison between the school district and
21 the homeless student and the student's legal guardian to coordinate compliance with
22 this section.

23 (g) Nothing in this section is intended to supersede the applicable
24 requirements of 42 U.S.C. 11431 - 11435 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
25 Assistance Improvement Act of 2001) or to require the hiring of additional personnel
26 or more than one liaison in each school district.

27 (h) In this section,

28 (1) "homeless student" means a person under 19 years of age who is in
29 a state of homelessness for lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
30 that is intended to serve as a permanent home; "homelessness" includes

31 (A) placement in an emergency shelter;

1 (B) placement in out-of-home care as defined under
2 AS 47.14.400;

3 (C) placement in transient housing; and

4 (D) the period in which a student is awaiting placement in out-
5 of-home care as defined under AS 47.14.400;

6 (2) "school of origin" means the school in which the student was last
7 enrolled.

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.43 is amended by adding a new section to read:

9 **Article 3A. Free Tuition for a Person Who Was in Out-of-Home Care.**

10 **Sec. 14.43.086. Free tuition and fees for a person who was in out-of-home**
11 **care.** (a) A person who enrolls as a student in good standing in a state-supported
12 educational institution in the state is entitled to a waiver of tuition, fees, and room and
13 board expenses if the person provides adequate proof that the person

14 (1) was in the custody of the state under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14;

15 (2) was placed in out-of-home care for a period of not less than six
16 consecutive months on or after the person became 16 years of age;

17 (3) has applied for educational grants or scholarships that the person is
18 otherwise eligible for as recommended by the educational institution;

19 (4) has applied for an available subsidized federal education loan; and

20 (5) is under 29 years of age.

21 (b) The amount of the waiver to which a person is entitled under this section is
22 the amount of unmet need for tuition, room, and board expenses, as determined by the
23 institution, after deducting funding for the school year from education loans, grants, or
24 scholarships received by a person eligible for a waiver.

25 (c) The proceeds of an education loan, grant, or scholarship received by a
26 person eligible for a waiver under this section must be paid to the educational
27 institution to offset the person's tuition, fees, and room and board expenses.

28 (d) A state-supported educational institution in the state is required to provide
29 a waiver under (a) of this section only if the legislature appropriates funds for the
30 purpose of offsetting waivers under this section. If an appropriation is not sufficient to
31 fully offset waivers for each person entitled to a waiver under (a) of this section, the

1 institution may offer full or partial waivers to eligible applicants as funding permits
2 and at the discretion of the institution.

3 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.43.160 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

4 (7) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

5 * **Sec. 4.** AS 36.30.850(b)(42) is amended to read:

6 (42) grants and contracts with qualified entities for services under
7 AS 47.18.330 for the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition program;

8 * **Sec. 5.** AS 47.05.060 is amended to read:

9 **Sec. 47.05.060. Purpose and policy relating to children.** The purpose of this
10 title as it relates to children is to secure for each child the care and guidance,
11 preferably in the child's own home, as well as an education, that will serve the moral,
12 emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical welfare of the child and the best interests
13 of the community; to preserve and strengthen the child's family ties unless efforts to
14 preserve and strengthen the ties are likely to result in physical or emotional damage to
15 the child, removing the child from the custody of the parents only as a last resort when
16 the child's welfare or safety or the protection of the public cannot be adequately
17 safeguarded without removal; and, when the child is removed from the family, to
18 secure for the child adequate custody, education, and care and adequate planning for
19 permanent placement of the child.

20 * **Sec. 6.** AS 47.05.065 is amended to read:

21 **Sec. 47.05.065. Legislative findings related to children.** The legislature finds
22 that

23 (1) parents have the following rights and responsibilities relating to the
24 care and control of their child while the child is a minor:

25 (A) the responsibility to provide the child with food, clothing,
26 shelter, education, and medical care;

27 (B) the right and responsibility to protect, nurture, train, and
28 discipline the child, including the right to direct the child's medical care and
29 the right to exercise reasonable corporal discipline;

30 (C) the right to determine where and with whom the child shall
31 live;

1 (D) the right and responsibility to make decisions of legal or
2 financial significance concerning the child;

3 (E) the right to obtain representation for the child in legal
4 actions; and

5 (F) the responsibility to provide special safeguards and care,
6 including appropriate prenatal and postnatal protection for the child;

7 (2) it is the policy of the state to strengthen families and to protect
8 children from child abuse and neglect; the state recognizes that, in some cases,
9 protection of a child may require removal of the child from the child's home; however,

10 (A) except in those cases involving serious risk to a child's
11 health or safety, the Department of Health and Social Services should provide
12 time-limited family support services to the child and the child's family in order
13 to offer parents the opportunity to remedy parental conduct or conditions in the
14 home that placed the child at risk of harm so that a child may return home
15 safely and permanently; and

16 (B) the state also recognizes that when a child is removed from
17 the home, visitation between the child and the child's parents or guardian and
18 family members reduces the trauma for the child and enhances the likelihood
19 that the child will be able to return home; therefore, whenever a child is
20 removed from the parental home, the Department of Health and Social
21 Services should encourage frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation of the
22 child with the child's parent or guardian and family members;

23 (3) it is the policy of the state to recognize that, when a child is a ward
24 of the state, the child is entitled to reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate
25 treatment and that the Department of Health and Social Services as legal custodian and
26 the child's guardian ad litem as guardian of the child's best interests and their agents
27 and assignees, each should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the child is provided
28 with reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate treatment for the duration of time
29 that the child is a ward of the state;

30 (4) it is in the best interests of a child who has been removed from the
31 child's own home for the state to apply the following principles in resolving the

1 situation:

2 (A) the child should be placed in a safe, secure, and stable
3 environment;

4 (B) the child should not be moved unnecessarily;

5 (C) a planning process should be followed to lead to permanent
6 placement of the child;

7 (D) every effort should be made to encourage psychological
8 attachment between the adult caregiver and the child;

9 (E) frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation with the parent
10 or guardian and family members should be encouraged; [AND]

11 (F) parents and guardians must actively participate in family
12 support services so as to facilitate the child's being able to remain in the home;
13 when children are removed from the home, the parents and guardians must
14 actively participate in family support services to make return of their children
15 to the home possible; and

16 (G) the child should continue to attend the child's school of
17 origin as provided under AS 14.03.096;

18 (5) numerous studies establish that

19 (A) children undergo a critical attachment process before the
20 time they reach six years of age;

21 (B) a child who has not attached with an adult caregiver during
22 this critical stage will suffer significant emotional damage that frequently leads
23 to chronic psychological problems and antisocial behavior when the child
24 reaches adolescence and adulthood; and

25 (C) it is important to provide for an expedited placement
26 procedure to ensure that all children, especially those under the age of six
27 years, who have been removed from their homes are placed in permanent
28 homes expeditiously.

29 * Sec. 7. AS 47.07.020(b) is amended to read:

30 (b) In addition to the persons specified in (a) of this section, the following
31 optional groups of persons for whom the state may claim federal financial

1 participation are eligible for medical assistance:

2 (1) persons eligible for but not receiving assistance under any plan of
3 the state approved under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act,
4 Supplemental Security Income) or a federal program designated as the successor to the
5 aid to families with dependent children program;

6 (2) persons in a general hospital, skilled nursing facility, or
7 intermediate care facility, who, if they left the facility, would be eligible for assistance
8 under one of the federal programs specified in (1) of this subsection;

9 (3) persons under 21 years of age who are under supervision of the
10 department, for whom maintenance is being paid in whole or in part from public
11 funds, and who are in out-of-home care [FOSTER HOMES] or private child-care
12 institutions;

13 (4) aged, blind, or disabled persons, who, because they do not meet
14 income and resources requirements, do not receive supplemental security income
15 under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act), and who do not
16 receive a mandatory state supplement, but who are eligible, or would be eligible if
17 they were not in a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility to receive an
18 optional state supplementary payment;

19 (5) persons under 21 years of age who are in an institution designated
20 as an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded and who are financially
21 eligible as determined by the standards of the federal program designated as the
22 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

23 (6) persons in a medical or intermediate care facility whose income
24 while in the facility does not exceed \$1,656 a month but who would not be eligible for
25 an optional state supplementary payment if they left the hospital or other facility;

26 (7) persons under 21 years of age who are receiving active treatment in
27 a psychiatric hospital and who are financially eligible as determined by the standards
28 of the federal program designated as the successor to the aid to families with
29 dependent children program;

30 (8) persons under 21 years of age and not covered under (a) of this
31 section [,] who would be eligible for benefits under the federal program designated as

1 the successor to the aid to families with dependent children program, except that they
2 have the care and support of both their natural and adoptive parents;

3 (9) pregnant women not covered under (a) of this section and who
4 meet the income and resource requirements of the federal program designated as the
5 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

6 (10) persons under 21 years of age not covered under (a) of this section
7 who the department has determined cannot be placed for adoption without medical
8 assistance because of a special need for medical or rehabilitative care and who the
9 department has determined are hard-to-place children eligible for subsidy under
10 AS 25.23.190 - 25.23.210;

11 (11) persons who can be considered under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(3) (Title
12 XIX, Social Security Act, Medical Assistance) to be individuals with respect to whom
13 a supplemental security income is being paid under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title
14 XVI, Social Security Act) because they meet all of the following criteria:

15 (A) they are 18 years of age or younger and qualify as disabled
16 individuals under 42 U.S.C. 1382c(a) (Title XVI, Social Security Act);

17 (B) the department has determined that

18 (i) they require a level of care provided in a hospital,
19 nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded;

20 (ii) it is appropriate to provide their care outside of an
21 institution; and

22 (iii) the estimated amount that would be spent for
23 medical assistance for their individual care outside an institution is not
24 greater than the estimated amount that would otherwise be expended
25 individually for medical assistance within an appropriate institution;

26 (C) if they were in a medical institution, they would be eligible
27 for medical assistance under other provisions of this chapter; and

28 (D) home and community-based services under a waiver
29 approved by the federal government are either not available to them under this
30 chapter or would be inappropriate for them;

31 (12) disabled persons, as described in 42 U.S.C.

1 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XIII), who are in families whose income, as determined under
2 applicable federal regulations or guidelines, is less than 250 percent of the official
3 poverty line applicable to a family of that size according to the United States
4 Department of Health and Human Services, and who, but for earnings in excess of the
5 limit established under 42 U.S.C. 1396d(q)(2)(B), would be considered to be
6 individuals with respect to whom a supplemental security income is being paid under
7 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c; a person eligible for assistance under this paragraph who is
8 not eligible under another provision of this section shall pay a premium or other cost-
9 sharing charges according to a sliding fee scale that is based on income as established
10 by the department in regulations;

11 (13) persons under 19 years of age who are not covered under (a) of
12 this section and whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal
13 poverty line as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human
14 Services and revised under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

15 (14) pregnant women who are not covered under (a) of this section and
16 whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty line as
17 defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and revised
18 under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

19 (15) persons who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer
20 and who are eligible for coverage under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XVIII);

21 (16) persons under 21 years of age who were in the custody of the
22 department under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14 and who were placed in out-of-home
23 care for a period of not less than six consecutive months on or after reaching 16
24 years of age.

25 * Sec. 8. AS 47.07.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

26 (o) In this section, "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

27 * Sec. 9. AS 47.10.080(c) is amended to read:

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

29 (1) order the child committed to the department for placement in an
30 appropriate setting for a period of time not to exceed two years or in any event not to
31 extend past the date the child becomes 19 years of age, except that the department or

1 the child's guardian ad litem may petition for and the court may grant in a hearing

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

5 (B) one-year extensions of commitment that do not extend
6 beyond the child's 21st birthday [AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIOD
7 OF STATE CUSTODY PAST 19 YEARS OF AGE] if the continued state
8 custody is in the best interests of the person and the person consents to it;

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

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

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

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

30 * Sec. 10. AS 47.10.080 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

31 (v) A social worker employed by or under contract with the department shall,

1 not less than monthly, conduct visits with a child committed to the custody of the
2 department under (c) of this section. The visits must be of sufficient substance and
3 duration to address issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the
4 child's safety, permanency, and well-being. The majority of the visits conducted under
5 this subsection must be at the location of the child's current placement. In this
6 subsection, "visit" means face-to-face contact between social worker and child.

7 (w) The department shall

8 (1) notify the governing body of a school district and the principal of
9 the school in which a student who is in the custody of the department is enrolled of a
10 change in the placement of the student if the placement is outside of the attendance
11 boundaries of the school; and

12 (2) assist the district in complying with the requirements of
13 AS 14.03.096.

14 * Sec. 11. AS 47.10.990(3) is amended to read:

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

16 (A) under 18 years of age;

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

20 (C) under 21 years of age if that person is living in out-of-
21 home care;

22 * Sec. 12. AS 47.10.990 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

23 (33) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

24 * Sec. 13. AS 47.18.300(a) is amended to read:

25 (a) The department, in coordination with local public and private agencies,
26 shall design, develop, and implement an out-of-home care [A FOSTER CARE]
27 transition program to provide support and services to individuals who

28 (1) reach or have reached the age of 16 or older while in state custody
29 and placed in out-of-home [FOSTER] care and have not yet reached 23 years of age;
30 and

31 (2) meet other eligibility criteria established by the department under

1 (b) of this section.

2 * **Sec. 14.** AS 47.18.310 is amended to read:

3 **Sec. 47.18.310. Program design.** The department, in coordination with local
4 public and private agencies, shall design the program as a continuation of the training
5 efforts related to independent living skills that were initiated for a child in state
6 custody who was placed in out-of-home care and [WHEN THE STATE FOSTER
7 CARE RECIPIENTS WERE] identified as being likely to remain in out-of-home
8 [STATE FOSTER] care until reaching not less than the age of 18. The program
9 design must require that program participants are directly involved in identifying the
10 program activities that will prepare them for independent living.

11 * **Sec. 15.** AS 47.18.320(a) is amended to read:

12 (a) Subject to the availability of an appropriation made for the purposes of
13 AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390, the program may provide

- 14 (1) education and vocational training;
- 15 (2) assistance in obtaining basic education and training;
- 16 (3) career and employment services;
- 17 (4) training in basic life skills;
- 18 (5) housing and utility assistance;
- 19 (6) mentoring and counseling; and
- 20 (7) other appropriate services to complement the efforts of former state
21 foster care recipients or a child who was in state custody and placed in out-of-
22 home care to achieve self-sufficiency.

23 * **Sec. 16.** AS 47.18 is amended by adding a new section to read:

24 **Sec. 47.18.335. Monetary living expense stipend.** (a) The department shall
25 provide a monthly monetary living expense stipend for a period not to exceed nine
26 months in an amount described in (b) of this section to an individual who

- 27 (1) has left out-of-home care at age 18 or older;
- 28 (2) is participating in services in the program; and
- 29 (3) has monthly contact with a social worker involved in the program.

30 (b) A stipend provided under this section shall be in an amount necessary to
31 meet an eligible individual's living expense as determined by the department. The

1 amount may not exceed

2 (1) for the first six months of eligibility, the daily rate provided to a
3 licensed foster parent; or

4 (2) for a period not to exceed three additional months during the period
5 that follows the first six months of eligibility, half of the daily rate provided to a
6 licensed foster parent.

7 (c) The department shall pay the stipend provided under this section until the
8 later of the date that the individual

9 (1) reaches 21 years of age; or

10 (2) has left out-of-home care for six months.

11 (d) The department may adopt regulations to implement this section.

12 * **Sec. 17.** AS 47.18.390(1) is amended to read:

13 (1) "program" means the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition
14 program authorized under AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390;

15 * **Sec. 18.** AS 47.18.390(3) is repealed and reenacted to read:

16 (3) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

17 * **Sec. 19.** AS 47.32.160 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

18 (c) A nonprofit organization that, and a person acting on behalf of the
19 organization who, engages in recruitment activities for foster homes that become
20 licensed under this chapter may not be held liable for the consequences of the
21 recruitment.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

April 5, 2010

Dear Health and Social Services Committee members:

During a committee hearing on April 1, 2010 a committee member asked how the cost of foster care compared to other costs to society. In response to that question, I have prepared the attached comparison.

The figures are from the 2005 Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study prepared by the University of Alaska Anchorage, School of Social Work and the 2009 Cost of Crime Research Summary prepared by the Institute of Social and Economic Research. Both reports are attached.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Foley".

Rose Foley

Aide to Representative Les Gara
465-2647

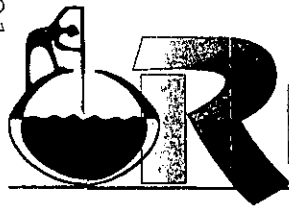
Incarceration

Cost of Extending Foster Care to age 21:	\$508,000 for 40 youth
Cost per youth per year:	\$12,700
Percentage of foster youth incarcerated after leaving care:	29%
Average number of incarcerations:	2.1
Average longest incarceration:	53.5 days
Cost of incarceration per year:	\$44,000
Cost of incarceration per day:	\$120
Average cost of foster youth incarceration:	\$12,840

Incarceration costs approximately \$140 per year more than foster care.

Public Assistance

Percentage of former foster youth receiving public assistance:	73.3%
Percentage of former foster youth living with someone who receives public assistance:	78.4%



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage • January 2009
R.S. No. 71

THE COST OF CRIME: COULD THE STATE REDUCE FUTURE CRIME AND SAVE MONEY BY EXPANDING EDUCATION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS ?

By Stephanie Martin and Steve Colt

Alaska's prison population is among the fastest-growing in the U.S., with five times more inmates in 2007 than in 1981. Spending for the state justice system has nearly doubled since 1981—but the crime rate has dropped only about 30%.

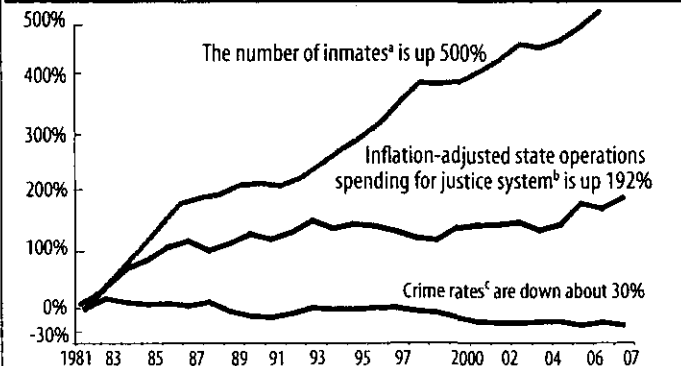
Here's the dilemma for the state, given the pattern shown in Figure 1: what can it do to hold down the number of inmates and stem the rising costs—while at the same time keeping the public safe and using tax dollars effectively?

Senator Hollis French asked ISER to project growth in the number of Alaska inmates and the associated costs—and then evaluate whether the state could reduce that growth by expanding intervention and prevention programs for people already in prison or at risk of ending up there. Alaska currently spends about \$17 million a year for such programs, but they aren't available to many of those who might benefit from them.

There are a wide range of such programs. But it is programs for adults who are already in prison or jail that have the most potential to save money and reduce crime in the next 20 years. That's because they can reach the most people.

We know that without any intervention, about two-thirds of those who serve their sentences and are released commit new crimes. Stopping at least some of them from committing more crimes would not only help improve public safety but also reduce growth in both the number of inmates and in spending.

Figure 1. Percentage Changes in Alaska Crime Rate, Spending for Justice System, and Number of Inmates, 1981-2007



^aInmates in prisons, jails, and halfway houses

^bSpending for Departments of Corrections, Public Safety, and Law; court system; Division of Juvenile Justice; Public Defender Agency; and Office of Public Advocacy. Does not include capital spending or payment on debt.

^cRates per 100,000 for murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

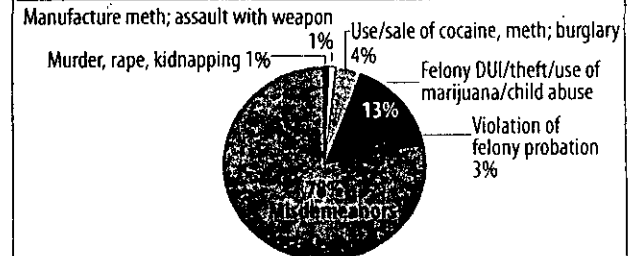
Sources: U.S. Department of Justice; state budget documents; Alaska Department of Corrections

Also, most of those released committed misdemeanors (Figure 2). Those who commit the most serious crimes serve long sentences and make up a small share of those released in any given year.

To analyze which programs have the most potential to reduce crime *and* save the state money, we worked with the Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group and the Washington State Institute of Public Policy. That institute did a similar analysis for Washington state and provided us with data it collected from program evaluations nationwide (see back page). What did our study show?

Figure 2. Who Gets out of Jail or Prison in Alaska?

(Total Releases, 2002-2007: 82,339)



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

• With no change in policies, the number of Alaska inmates is likely to double by 2030, from 5,300 to 10,500.

• If the state spent an additional \$4 million a year to expand programs it already has, the prison population in 2030 might be 10% smaller than projected—about 1,050 fewer inmates.

• The state would spend about \$124 million for expanded programs through 2030 but would avoid \$445 million in costs—a savings of \$321 million. It would save money by incarcerating fewer people and by delaying prison construction costs. (Figures 3 and 8).

• Education and substance-abuse treatment programs—in prison, after prison, and instead of prison—save the state two to five times what they cost and reach the most people. Programs for teenagers are also very effective at reducing crime and saving money, but they reach fewer people.

Figure 3. Potential Effects, Costs of, and Savings from Expanded Prevention or Intervention Programs

Immediate Costs

- \$17 million: Current annual state spending on programs
- \$4 million: Additional spending every year to expand programs

Long-Term Effects on Prison Population



By 2030, expanded programs could keep 1 in 10 people out of prison who would otherwise be there

Long-Term Savings (2009-2030)

Cost of expanded programs* **\$124 million** — Savings: **\$321 million**
 Avoided inmate costs and delayed prison construction costs* **\$445 million**

*Assumes 2% annual inflation through 2030

WHY CONSIDER EXPANDING PROGRAMS?

In 1980, 2 in 1,000 Alaskans were behind bars; today that share is approaching 10 in 1,000. The sharp increase started in the 1980s, when the state government began collecting large oil revenues. The state used some of that money to expand police agencies, courts, and other parts of the criminal justice system statewide. Also in the 1980s, it made sentencing for the most serious felonies more uniform and stiffened sentences.

The crime rate in Alaska has declined since the 1980s. But the number of Alaskans in prisons, jails, and halfway houses has increased much faster, as have costs for the state justice system. Alaska's prisons are full, and the 1,500-bed prison scheduled to open in 2012 is projected to be full soon after it opens.

Locking people up is expensive, whether their crimes are major or less serious. Alaska spends on average \$44,000 a year per inmate in prisons, jails, and halfway houses. Adjusted for inflation, that's actually less than in the 1980s—but it's still a lot (Figure 4).

Studies in other states have shown that some intervention and prevention programs can help cut both costs and crime, either by keeping people who have served their sentences from committing new crimes after they're released, or preventing some people from going to prison in the first place.

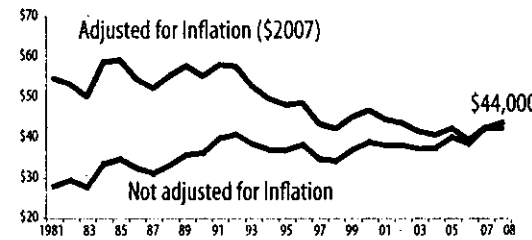
WHAT PROGRAMS DID WE ANALYZE?

The Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group gave us a list of programs to analyze. We looked for programs with the biggest potential payoff for the state—those that could reduce growth in both numbers of inmates and in spending for corrections, at a reasonable cost for the state.

Alaska already has a number of programs in place, and we found that expanding some of those would be most cost-effective. Table 1 lists the programs in our final analysis. As a guideline for what was a "reasonable" expansion, we used 10% to 20% of the eligible people not already served—except for very small programs that can't easily be expanded that much.

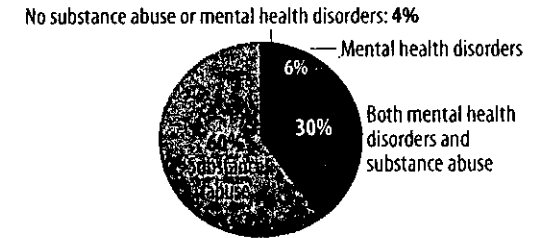
These programs would serve inmates, at-risk juveniles, and young children. They are all intended to reduce future crime in some way. Programs that treat substance-abuse or mental health disorders have been shown to reduce recidivism—and as Figure 5 shows, almost all current inmates have those disorders.

Figure 4. Annual State Costs Per Inmate,* 1981-2008
(In Thousands of Dollars)



*Average cost of incarcerating people in prisons, jails, and halfway houses.
Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

Figure 5. How Many Alaska Inmates Have Substance Abuse or Mental Health Disorders?



Sources: Alaska Department of Corrections; Alaska Mental Health Trust

Table 1. Current Size and Potential Expansion of Intervention and Prevention Programs^a

Programs	Currently serve	Reasonable expansion	Potentially eligible (2008)
Prison-based programs			
Education (adult basic; vocational)	More than 1,000	500	Almost all inmates (4,500)
Substance-Abuse (residential; intensive outpatient)	Close to 500	500	90% of inmates (approximately 4,000)
Sex-offender treatment ^b	0	50	10% of 500 eligible inmates
Transition from prison			
Transition for inmates with mental health disorders (Institutional Discharge Project)	70	100	36% of inmates (1,600)
Alternatives to incarceration			
Mental health, drug, alcohol courts; electronic monitoring; residential substance-abuse treatment	500	500	Approximately 5,000 ^c
Juvenile offenders			
Aggression replacement training; family therapy; residential treatment; institutional transition	Approximately 500	1,000	Approximately 3,000
Prevention			
Head Start for 3- and 4-year olds from low-income families ^d	3,025	450	Approximately 8,000 ^e

^aPrograms included in our final analysis are those for which we found evidence that expansion would have significant pay-offs for the state at a reasonable cost. We evaluated additional programs not included here, either because there wasn't sufficient evidence to assess their effectiveness or because they weren't feasible to implement in Alaska at this time.

^bTo effectively reduce crime, sex offender treatment programs need to be offered in both prison and the community. Treatment is currently available only in the community, so the number served in prison is currently zero—but there are proposals to add treatment in prison.

^cPeople facing low-level charges and with substance-abuse problems.

^dHead Start is a federal program, but the state supplements federal money and Governor Sarah Palin has proposed additional state funding.

^eWe assume all children from families with up to double the poverty-level income would be eligible.

We looked at but excluded other programs from our final analysis. The criminal justice working group decided that a few programs, while effective elsewhere, wouldn't be feasible to implement in Alaska at this time. For other programs, there wasn't enough available evidence to judge how effective they were in saving money or reducing crime, or the available evidence showed them to be largely ineffective.

How Do the Programs Compare?

As Figure 3 (front page) shows, expanding programs to serve more of the eligible people would save the state about \$321 million and reduce the projected number of inmates 10% by 2030. Figures 6 and 7 show how the various programs contribute to costs, savings, and reductions in the number of Alaskans behind bars.

- Education and substance-abuse treatment programs for inmates save two to four times what they cost, reduce recidivism by about four percentage points, and can reach the most people.

- Intervention programs for juveniles who have committed crimes are very effective at saving money and reducing recidivism, but they serve a much smaller number of people.

- Programs that set up transition services for inmates with mental-health disorders coming out of prison are among the most effective—but they can't readily be expanded to serve the many people who could benefit from them.

- Alternatives to prison for some people charged with lesser offenses save the state money right away, and almost all reduce recidivism. The exception is electronic monitoring, which is inexpensive but hasn't been shown to reduce future crime.

- Treatment programs for sex offenders do reduce crime, but they are very expensive and so don't save the state money.

- Programs that prevent future crime by helping very young at-risk children are the most effective. But the effects of spending for those programs aren't apparent until many years later.

Figure 6. How Effective Are Various Programs at Saving Money and Reducing Crime?

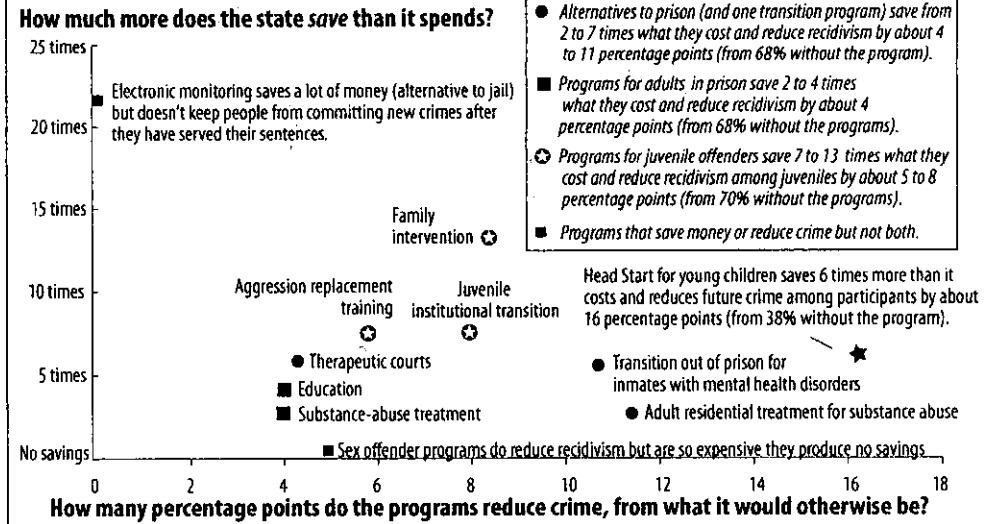
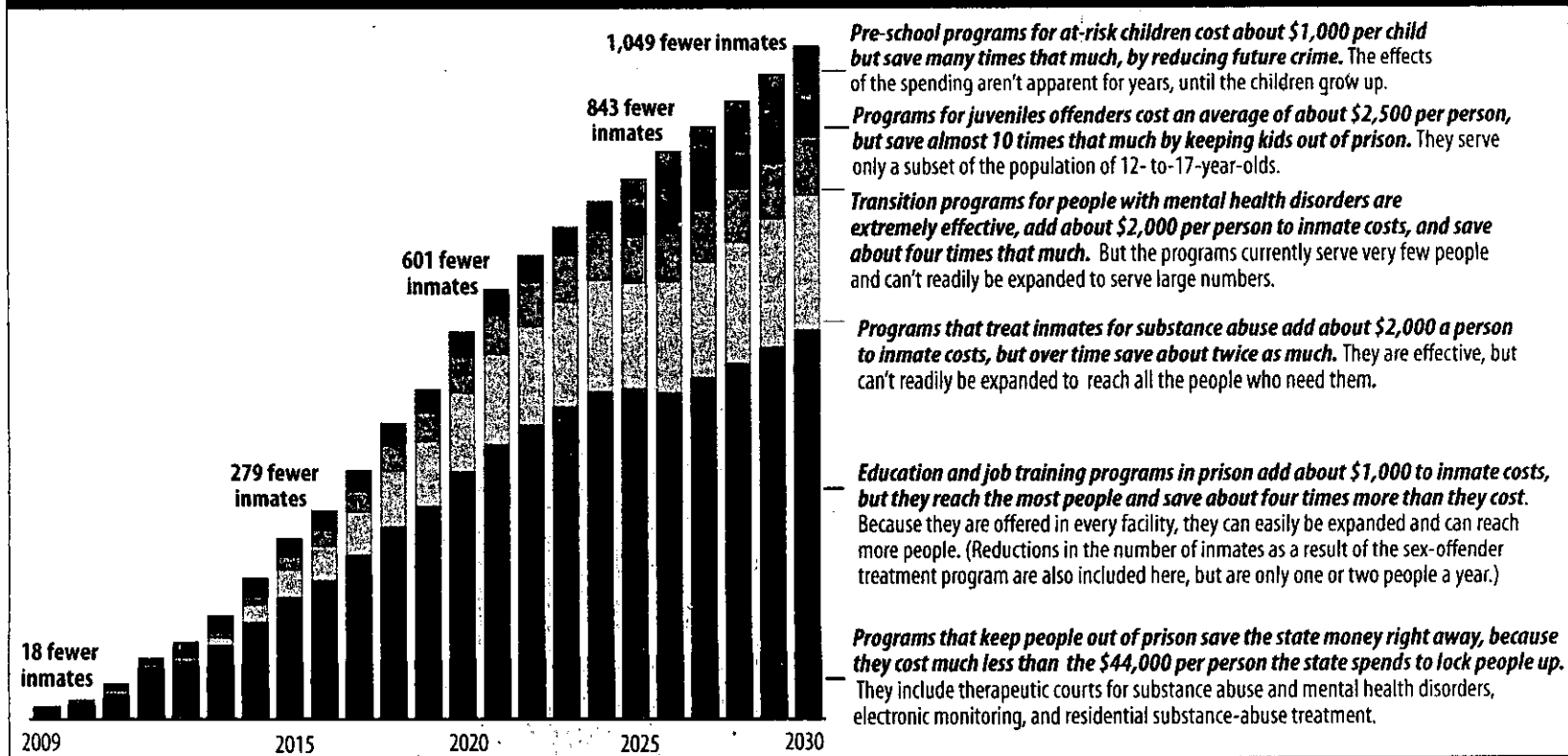


Figure 7. How Would Expanding Specific Programs Contribute to Reducing Growth in Numbers of Inmates?



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Figure 8 shows how Alaska's corrections system got where it is and where it's likely to go—if intervention and prevention programs are kept at their current levels, and if the most effective programs are expanded to serve more of the eligible people.

We found that the state could both reduce the number of Alaskans in prison or jail and save considerable money over the next 20 years, by adding about \$4 million a year to the \$17 million it currently spends to keep people from returning to prison—or prevent them from ever going there at all.

Spending more for these programs even as oil prices and state revenues are falling may not seem like a good idea. But Alaska also needs to look to the future—and over time the benefits of strategically expanding those programs that reduce crime and keep more Alaskans out of prison far outweigh the costs.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Our job was to assess whether specific programs could reduce long-term state spending for corrections by reducing growth in the number of inmates. As a starting point, we needed evaluations of how effective various programs are at reducing future crime.

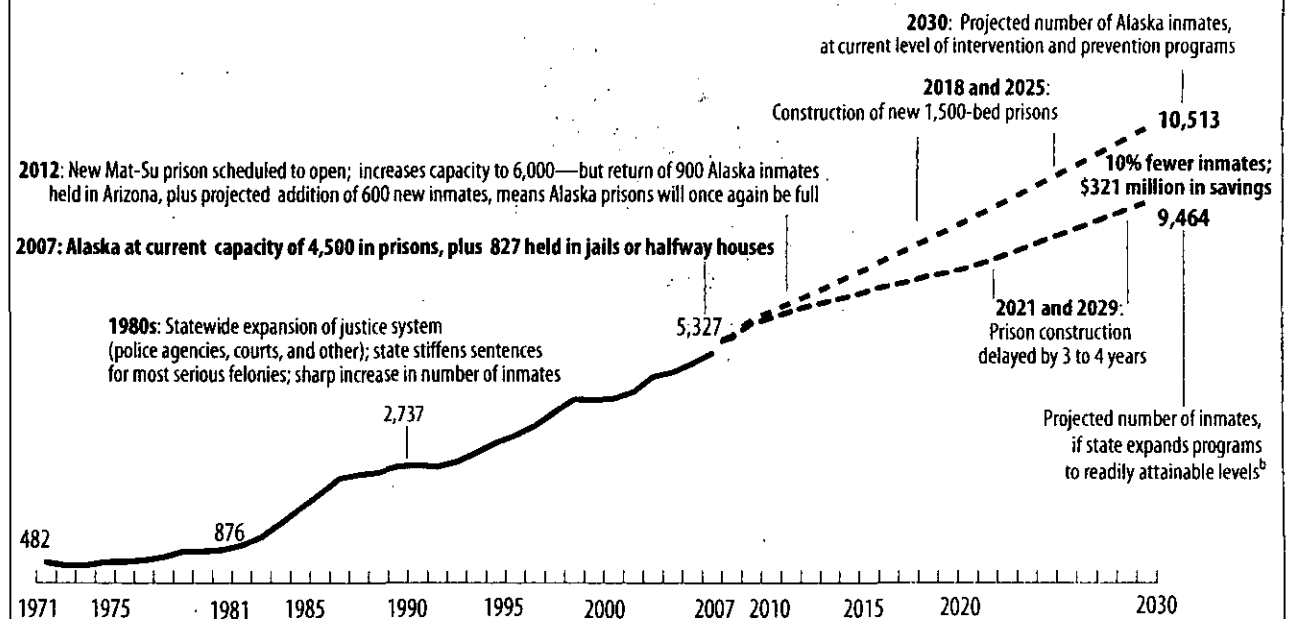
But except for some of the therapeutic court programs, most programs in Alaska have not been rigorously evaluated. Therefore, we used results of a Washington state assessment that systematically reviewed 571 program evaluations from around the country.

To be included, evaluations had to have carefully designed control groups, replicable results in multiple settings, and long-lasting effects. This method is evidence-based public policy, which merges research and practice. It is similar to clinical trials in medicine. Keep in mind that this is a new field, and only about 10% of programs in place nationwide have been evaluated at this standard.

With data from rigorous evaluations, the Washington State Institute of Public Policy created a model that estimated the effects of programs on recidivism—and then combined those results with a cost-benefit analysis to estimate the long-term effects on state spending and inmate populations.

We combined the institute's estimates of recidivism with Alaska data on program costs, eligible groups, and state population to estimate long-term effects on crime and state spending.

Figure 8. Average Number of Alaska Inmates,^a 1971-2007, and Projected Number, 2008-2030



^aAverage daily number of people in prisons, jails, and halfway houses. ^bThe number of people who could be readily added to program rolls varies considerably by program; see Table 1.
Sources: Alaska Department of Corrections; ISER projections of number of prisoners, based on Alaska Department of Labor projections of Alaska population 18-64 and assuming no change in current use of rehabilitation programs as well as expanded use; Washington State Institute of Public Policy

The authors thank the members of the Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group for their help in identifying programs to evaluate and for comments on drafts of this publication. The Alaska Legislature funded this group in 2007 and authorized the Alaska Judicial Council to act as its staff.

The group is chaired by a justice of the Alaska Supreme Court and Alaska's lieutenant governor. Other members include top policymakers from the departments of Corrections, Public Safety, Health and Social Services, and Law, as well as the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority; the heads of the Alaska Public Defender Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy; the administrative and deputy directors for the Alaska Court System; the executive director of the Judicial Council, the U.S. attorney, and Anchorage's police chief.

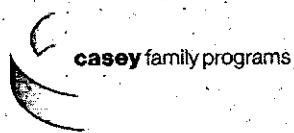
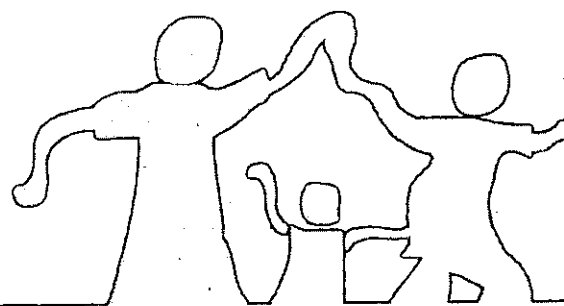
This group meets monthly to talk about long-term justice issues, as well as to resolve any inter-branch issues that come up among the many agencies and organizations that deal with aspects of Alaska's justice system.

The authors also thank Elizabeth Drake and Steve Aos of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy for developing the methods and models we used and for helping us apply them to Alaska. For more information go to www.wsipp.wa.gov.

This research summary and many other publications on a wide range of topics are available on ISER's Web site:

www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu

Alaskan Foster Care Alumni Study





Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study

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CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

TRIBAL STATE COLLABORATION GROUP

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES



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August 2005

Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study

Conducted by

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE
School of Social Work
Child Welfare Evaluation Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Overview

The Alaskan Foster Care Alumni Study examined the outcomes of young adults who had "aged out" of State custody after spending much of their adolescence in foster care. The study team, composed of representatives from the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services, Casey Family Programs, the Tribal-State Collaboration Group, and the University of Alaska Anchorage, sought to answer the following questions about a cohort of Alaskan foster care alumni: where are they living, how they were faring socially, economically, and emotionally, and how do they perceived their experiences in foster care? Alumni eligible for the study were 19 to 29 years of age, had spent at least one continuous year in out-of-home care in state protective custody, with that year being between 15 and 18 years of age, and had left care on or after their 16th birthday. Of the 140 alumni who met these criteria, nearly 53% were female and 50% were Alaska Native. Sixty-six interviews were conducted between May and December 2004, representing an adjusted response rate of nearly 60%.

Findings

Despite the hardships of abuse and neglect, removal from biological family, multiple moves and transitions, and minimal preparation for adult living, many Alaskan foster care alumni were thriving. Through persistence, emotional support and connections, and their own resourcefulness and that of others, they have grown into contributing members of the communities where they live. The outcomes below represent both the successes and difficulties experienced by the Alaskan foster care alumni studied. Most participants spent their time in foster care before Chafee funds were readily available for educational and other transitional services. In addition, regional independent living services have recently been expanded by the State Office of Children's Services to provide more foster youth with the resources to successfully transition into adulthood.

Whole Population Outcomes:

- Nearly three-quarters of the foster care alumni remain in Alaska. These alumni were predominately clustered in the Southcentral region of the state, followed by the Southwestern and Southeastern regions.
- Nearly one in five alumni had been involved in the criminal justice system at some point in their lives.

Outcomes from Interviewed Alumni:

Socio-Emotional:

- Positive relationships formed while youth were in care continued to be an important source of support later in life. Nearly 76% of alumni reported having had a positive close relationship with an adult while in foster care. Almost three-quarters of these alumni reported still being in contact with these adults.
- Fewer than 10% of alumni were placed with their siblings in their first foster home. Nearly three-quarters of these alumni were *never* placed with their siblings. Study participants reported that sibling relationships continued to be important to them into adulthood.
- Rates of early parenthood were high. Nearly 10% of interviewed females became pregnant before age 17. By age 19, 57% of females and 41% of males were parents.
- Alumni reported having a wide social network of family and friends. The average number of friends alumni reported having was nearly eight. Contact with friends was frequent—82% reported talking on the phone or visiting with friends a few times a month or more, including 38% with daily contact.
- In general, most alumni reported being happy with their current living situations. More than 8 in 10 alumni reported feeling “happy” or “very happy” in each area of a life satisfaction rating. A relatively substantial proportion, however, reported extremely poor mental health.

Physical and Behavioral Health:

- Use of mental health resources among alumni was high. Nearly 80% reported lifetime use of behavioral or mental health services, including 35% reporting overnight treatment stays and 68% seeing a professional (such as a psychologist, social worker, or minister) outside of an overnight stay. About 27% reported using any of these services in the past year, while nearly 17% of the total reported that they were *currently* seeing a professional.
- Alcohol use by alumni was slightly below the average for statewide alcohol use figures for people of similar age, while their rates of marijuana use were slightly higher than the statewide rate. Although nearly 50% of alumni reported drinking in the past month, 21% reported being drunk during the same time period. Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana was rare.
- Most alumni rated their overall physical health at the same level as the general population. A small number, however, reported very poor health.

Education, Employment, and Health Insurance:

- Few alumni received financial, employment, or educational assistance as they made their transition out of state care to living on their own. Compared with the Wisconsin or the Northwest alumni studies, Alaskan alumni received fewer services in most areas as they exited state care. However, the exception was in finding contact persons to help with future problems.
- Nearly 38% of alumni reported being homeless after leaving care. This is higher than the homeless rates of 12-25% from other foster care alumni studies.

- The high school completion rate for foster care alumni was slightly below the statewide average. Many Alaskan alumni took longer to achieve their high school diploma (often finishing between 19 and 25 years of age), but few went on to complete post-secondary education.
- Many alumni were struggling financially. Although some were doing quite well, average income was low, and the proportion lacking health insurance coverage doubled state and national rates.

Costs to Society:

- * Nearly 30% of alumni were incarcerated for some period of time after leaving care. Nearly 21% of interviewed alumni reported being placed in juvenile corrections while in care, but only 64% of these were jailed again after leaving care.
- * Alumni reported a high utilization of public assistance resources in their households. Over 77% of alumni (including 73% of those who live alone and 78% of those living with others) reported that someone with whom they lived received some form of public assistance in the last six months.

Recommendations

The following recommendations address the outcomes revealed in this study. They are based on policies, programs, and practices that have been shown to be effective in other research. Stakeholders (representing members of the research partnership) participated in refining and clarifying these recommendations, as well as adding their own list of actions which they believe will improve foster care in Alaska.

- **Increase early intervention:** In general, early intervention efforts are recommended to minimize most of the poor outcomes described in this report. Research has shown, for example, that family support programs are more successful the younger the children are.
- **Involve youth in planning:** Simply being more informed can help increase a youth's sense of predictability, while having a say can increase the sense of control.
- **Provide comprehensive assessment:** A comprehensive assessment—covering physical and emotional development, cognitive functioning and academics, life-skills, social relationships and functioning, etc.—can result in a detailed service and support plan, a road map for all concerned with helping the youth return to an optimal developmental path.
- **Maximize placement stability:** A comprehensive assessment can help match youth to foster parents. Better matching can improve relationships with foster families, which in turn results in improved outcomes during and after care.
- **Encourage positive adult relationships:** The development of a consistent adult relationship can have a variety of positive effects, including socio-emotional, educational, and employment outcomes.
- **Promote legal ties, such as adoption and guardianship, throughout adolescence and even into adulthood:** Subsidized guardianship may be an especially appropriate choice of permanency options for adolescents and/or

children in kinship care placements, particularly in Native communities that might disapprove of termination of parental rights.

- **Support relationships with foster parents after youth reach 18:** In order to promote maintenance of adult connections, the State should work to remove barriers to having young people remain in the home or in contact after emancipation.
- **Promote sibling contact, as appropriate:** Optimally, sibling groups would remain intact. There is a slowly growing body of research supporting the benefits of keeping sibling groups together when appropriate.
- **Provide sexuality education to all foster youth:** Foster youth appear to be relatively likely to engage in early sex, often resulting in pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Provide parenting support for youth who do become parents:** Once a young person does have a child, they need support and training to avoid the poor outcomes common to young parents.
- **Improve mental health treatment:** Proper assessment can help develop a treatment plan to be implemented by caseworkers, foster parents, teachers, and others, in the home and out. Proper training, for example in cognitive-behavioral interventions, will maximize the effectiveness of this plan.
- **Extend foster care services:** Intact families do not expect their children to live alone at 18. Given the array of difficulties faced by foster children, as well as the negative short-term outcomes found in this and other studies (e.g., 30% homeless within a year of leaving care), some form of extended service is warranted.
- **Use the Chafee Medicaid option to extend health coverage:** Given the health problems, poor finances, and lack of health insurance experienced by many alumni, they appear to be at risk of joining the tens of thousands of Americans who die each year due to a lack of health insurance.
- **Develop a detailed transition plan with each youth:** Youth often express anxiety over the prospect of leaving care and being on their own. Having a plan can help alleviate that anxiety.
- **Facilitate communication across roles and functions:** The benefits of assessment and thorough planning can come only if parties communicate. Thus, information must pass from professional to professional and also from caseworker to foster parent, caseworker to new caseworker (if necessary), school to school, child welfare agency to educational system, caseworker and foster parent to therapist, and so on.
- **Support caseworkers in their efforts to help youth transition to adulthood:** Training should include developmental issues and information on accessing the wide variety of resources, within OCS and without, that are available. Only if a worker is aware of a service and of how to pay for it can a youth or young adult take advantage of opportunities that are available to them. Worker-youth relationships can also be improved by matching trained and interested workers with adolescents.

Stakeholder Recommendations: Strategies to Improve Foster Care in Alaska

In addition to the recommendations above, various advocates of improved foster care emphasized the following strategies to improve foster care in the state:

- Increase the number and cultural diversity of resource families.
- Expand targeted recruitment of resource families to reach underrepresented cultural groups, with particular emphasis on reaching out to Alaska Native families.
- Increase the number of resource families with the capacity and expertise to provide care to adolescents, with the goal of maintaining relationships into adulthood.
- Expand efforts to more carefully match children's needs with the culture, style, and capabilities of foster families
- Increase kinship care; provide support and training to families providing this care.
- Expand the use of the Team Decision Making model currently used in the Anchorage OCS office (from Family to Family by the Annie E. Casey Foundation). This process involves families and community members actively in case planning and decision-making.
- Reduce the reliance on emergency shelter care.
- Reduce the use of residential care.
- Provide more agency and respite support to resource families.
- Build academic support for foster children through working with schools and other community resources.
- Increase post-secondary education and vocational training for foster youth and alumni, including job training, job shadowing, and apprenticeships.
- Increase the number of safe, affordable transitional housing options for foster care alumni.

Conclusions

The intent of this study was to provide insight into the experiences of foster care alumni with the hopes of improving the lives of current and future generations of youth who find themselves removed from their birth families and placed in state custody. This responsibility does not rest solely with the State of Alaska, but with communities, families, caregivers, tribal programs, caseworkers, residential youth facilities, schools, and even the youth themselves. This study's findings support those of several other studies supporting the need to promote key ingredients that, if provided to youth early, can greatly enhance their chances of success.

These are, among many others: positive, consistent adult relationships; youth participating in their own planning; early and on-going preparation for independent living; on-going connection to family members when appropriate; and allowing youth to receive the economic and emotional benefits of remaining in care until 21. Care, support, mentoring, training, and financial assistance will ultimately benefit foster youth, their communities, and all of us.

Employment, finances, and health insurance

Nearly 6 in 10 respondents (58.5%) were working at the time of the interview, while 17% were not in the workforce. The unemployment rate among this sample was 29.6%, compared to a reported unemployment rate in Alaska of 7.1% in May 2004 and 7.6% in December 2004 (5.6% and 5.4%, respectively, in the US) (Robinson, 2004, 2005). (Note that while the interview asked if respondents were "looking for work" this may not meet the definition applied by the State and the Federal government, requiring an active attempt to find work, as reported to the unemployment office, in the past 4 weeks.) Among those who worked, the range of hours was from 8 to 60, with an average of 35 hours per week. Two respondents were reportedly permanently disabled.

Given the high rate of unemployment and low rates of college completion in this sample, average income was low. The average of approximately \$12,300 is a little more than half of the Census Bureau's 2003 estimate of per capita income for Alaska of \$24,361. The median income was \$9,500, equivalent to the Federal poverty level for a single person household in 2003 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Mills, 2004); only five alumni reported personal incomes above \$40,000. Approximately 39% of the respondents had no health insurance.

Cost to Society

Criminality

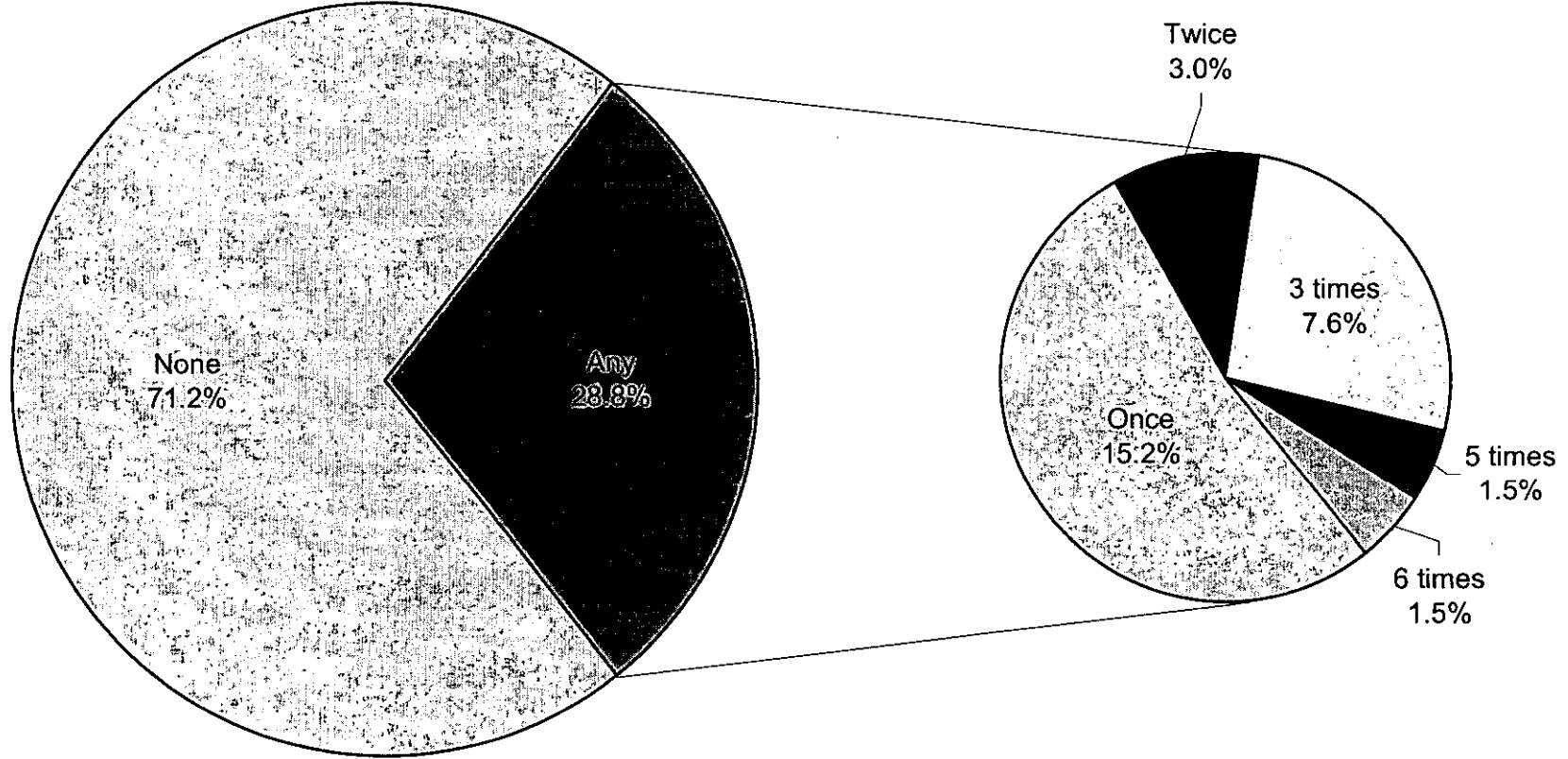
One in five alumni (14 alumni, or 21.2%) reported in the interview that they had experienced placement in a juvenile corrections facility before leaving care (and perhaps before entering care), starting at an average age of just over 15 years of age. The alumni reported an average total time in such placements of 27 days.

Several sources of information can be combined to examine alumni interactions with the criminal justice system after leaving care. State and federal records indicated that more than 1 in 5 alumni (21.4% of the entire population of 140) had some criminal record, including 15 alumni who were incarcerated throughout the interviewing period. Interview data revealed that more than half of the alumni had been arrested, which may have included while they were juveniles. Nineteen alumni (28.8% of those interviewed) reported being jailed after leaving care, including 9 of the 14 (64.3%) who reported spending time in juvenile detention. The average first age of imprisonment was 19.9, or less than 18 months after the average age of leaving care (18.5). The average number of incarcerations was 2.1, with an average longest stay of 53.5 days. More than half of those imprisoned after leaving care were jailed only once (see Figure 13). Combining interview data with government records indicated that 43% of the entire population of alumni had some interaction with the criminal justice system after leaving care.

Household public assistance use

Over 77% of alumni (including 73.3% of those who live alone and 78.4% of those living with others) reported that someone in their household received some form of public assistance in the last six months, including 32% receiving food stamps, 27% receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families aid, and 27% receiving help from the Women,

Figure 13. Times in jail since leaving care among interviewed alumni.



Infants, and Children program (see Table 15). Three alumni reported that someone in their household was receiving a foster care or adoption subsidy. Nearly 11% reported that someone in the household was receiving unemployment benefits. Five alumni (7.7%) reported that someone in their household was receiving financial aid to attend school.

Table 15. Household public assistance or aid program use, past 6 months.

Any program:	77.3%
Medicaid/Medicare	55.6%
Food stamps	31.8%
TANF	26.6%
WIC	27.3%
Supplemental Social Security	26.6%
Foster care or adoption subsidy	4.6%
Unemployment	10.6%
Public housing	9.4%
Energy program	7.6%
Child care subsidy	4.6%
Student financial aid	7.7%
Other aid	15.6%

DISCUSSION

Socio-emotional Outcomes

Supportive Adult Relationships

“Optimal child development occurs when a spectrum of needs are consistently met over an extended period” (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000, p. 1146). Many youth in long-term foster care experience a host of disruptions to their relationships: removal from their birth family, new foster parents, new foster siblings, a new school, a new caseworker, and new guardian ad litem. These multiple disruptions make it difficult to develop trusting relationships (Briere, 1992; Chalk et al., 2002; Downs & Williams, 2003; Mech, 2003). Nearly a quarter of the Alaska alumni reported no close relationship with an adult while they were in care.

I think (my foster mom) has really helped with a lot of my successes. She's the only one that I can really pinpoint.
Study participant

The development of a consistent adult relationship, a constant through the storm of foster care, can have a variety of positive effects, including socio-emotional, educational, and employment outcomes. Positive adult relationships help youth develop into psychologically healthy adults (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000). Viewing this

from the Assets Framework, trusting adult relationships and positive role models are protective factors that can promote the development of other assets: creative activities, high expectations and achievement motivation, interpersonal competence, self-esteem, etc. (Mannes, Roehlkepartain, & Benson, 2005; see the Search Institute website at www.search-institute.org/ for more information). An “available...and devoted” adult (Downs & Williams, 2003, p. 496) can be a foster parent, an elder or extended family member with whom the youth maintains contact, a dedicated caseworker, or some other mentor.

Mentors have been shown to be effective in helping produce positive outcomes in youth (see, for example, Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Grossman & Tierney, 1998), particularly when mentors are trained and supported. Mech (2003) describes mentors as a form of social capital, a way to connect foster youth to resources—community resources, other helpful individuals, job and education resources, etc.—that can have positive returns for the individual and society, in the form of reductions in school dropouts, delinquency, and antisocial behavior; avoidance of adolescent pregnancy; prevention of family violence; and future taxable income. Mentors provide examples of functional adulthood and healthy relationships. They can reinforce the value of education and provide informal tutoring, supply job shadowing opportunities, and encourage youth to explore and learn. This was supported by a recent study of Alaskan youth ages 14-19 in state custody (Pope & Williams, 2005a) who reported that adult mentors, coaches, foster parents and other positive role models were essential to them as they acquired and practiced the skills they think are important to live as successful adults.

There has been increased discussion about connecting foster youth or alumni with adults (Collins, 2001), including adoption beyond what has been traditionally considered something of a deadline for adoption: the onset of adolescence. Alumni in the current project discussed the benefits of feeling like there was someone they could count on even after leaving their (last) foster home:

She was just such a cheery little person; you could talk to her about anything. I still go and visit her. She is just an awesome person. She is so much like what a mother should be, in my eyes. (Study participant)

In addition to individuals taking on this role spontaneously, formal efforts, such as the California Permanency for Youth Project (www.cypyp.org), are appearing around the country to promote permanency for older youth and even adult foster care alumni. Such programs are not intended to take the place of independent living preparation. The focus is less on independence and more on connections—personal and legal—with adults (Louisell, 2004). Alaska’s development of subsidized guardianship should provide another way to increase connections with adults. Guardianship may be an especially feasible choice for adolescents and/or those in kinship care situations (National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center, 2003) by establishing connections without severing birth family ties.

No matter what form they take, encouraging the formation of positive, consistent adult relationships will have many preventive effects (Downs & Caldwell, 2003; Downs &

Williams, 2003; Mannes et al., 2005; Pecora et al., 2005a). Assets research has shown that maximizing the number of assets is related to increased thriving behaviors, decreased high-risk behaviors, and improved well-being (Mannes et al., 2005). Thus, concentrating on developing adult relationships among foster youth will in turn address many of the poor outcomes for which foster care alumni seem to be at risk: the Northwest Alumni Study report (Pecora et al., 2005a) recommendations discuss adult connections as being important for improving outcomes in mental health, education, and employment and finances. The current study, similar to others (Collins, 2001), documents that social contact and support appear to be strengths among foster care graduates (although no comparisons were made with the general population). Further analysis will illustrate the protective nature of this support for foster care alumni.

Sibling and Birth Family Contact

As demonstrated in Figure 6, too many of the alumni in this study lived through the experience of not only being separated from their parents, but also from their siblings. Although sibling contact appears to have been fairly well supported (71% of those not placed with siblings reported seeing them again at least once before leaving care), a number of responses to the open-ended question "*What could have been done to better help you while you were in care?*" indicated that for those who were unable to have contact with their siblings, this was a negative experience that left a major impression:

The people who cared for my brother and sister did not make an effort for us to see one another and we all lost communication.

I would have liked to have been closer to my siblings; they should have made a greater effort to keep me close to family.

I think I should have been kept with all my siblings. I was emotionally stressed about that; I loved my brothers and sisters.

[It would have been better to have] contact with my brothers more and family more and the social workers more.

There is a slowly growing body of research supporting the benefits of keeping sibling groups together when appropriate (Herrick & Piccus, 2005; Leathers, 2005; Tarren-Sweeney & Hazell, 2005). Siblings can provide a protective factor for adjusting to foster care and preventing placement change. By helping youth maintain these relationships, workers can increase the probability of a young person having supportive relationships upon leaving care.

Birth family contact can also be important when such contact is appropriate (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000). Consistent with previous research, Leathers (2005) found that the frequency of maternal visitation among foster youth predicted chances for reunification. Birth family members are important for youth that do not reunify, as well. Many young people move in with birth parents or other relatives soon after leaving care, sometimes by default (Courtney et al., 2001; Courtney et al., 2005; McDonald et al., 1996). Foster youth struggle with being disconnected from people and resources and they

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

Sponsor Statement

HB 126: Success For Foster Youth

HB 126 is designed to fix some of the most glaring problems in our foster care system – problems that serve to deny opportunity and success to at risk foster youth. It is cost effective, and designed to supplement partial efforts that exist today. Given the number of foster youth in Alaska – approximately 2,000 – the cost of this effort will not be substantial, but the economic and human and opportunity cost of not passing it will be.

The legislation is an outgrowth of this past fall's bi-partisan legislative foster care conference, and work by Alaska's foster youth, who have become increasingly active in seeking solutions for the problems they face on a day to day basis.

Today roughly 40% of foster youth end up homeless at some point in their lives after leaving foster care. That's unacceptable, and HB 126 proposes cost effective solutions to that problems. It is estimated that less than 10% of our foster youth graduate from college. Foster youth end up in jail and on state-paid social services, and in social service treatment in greater numbers than their peers. Tolerating this costs Alaskans in terms of money, lost economic activity and human opportunity.

HB 126 does the following:

- It requires OCS to meet federal standards by requiring in person visits with foster children on a monthly basis. Many states impose such a requirement to spur compliance by their state agencies, and the language in HB 126 is taken from Minnesota. The most recent federal review of our system states that in roughly 1/3 of the cases OCS staff meet once every 8 months with foster youth. OCS is working on improving this, and OCS staff are eager to find ways to comply with the monthly visit standards that are so important if we are to protect our foster youth from harm, and learn their needs so they can succeed.
- It provides housing assistance to youth coming out of foster care, for up to a year. Current rules allow OCS to pay for one month of full rent, and then 2 months of rent at 50% of the youth's cost.
- It provides tuition and room and board for in-state job training and college. Currently there are a limited number of tuition-only scholarships available to youth, and some job training assistance. This provision would make that assistance complete. The room and

board component is crucial, as foster youth have no home they can live in after foster care ends.

- It requires that foster youth be allowed to remain in their current school when they suffer a foster family placement change. Bouncing youth between schools causes failure, and federal law provides partial funding to allow students to avoid school transfers.
- It requires that when foster youth are transferred to a new school, they be allowed to attend immediately, and requires that their transcript information be transferred to the new school within 7 days.

Federal funding is available for portions of this effort, and the limited number of foster youth in Alaska would make implementation of this effort relatively inexpensive. If we don't pursue this legislation, Alaska's foster youth will continue facing unfair barriers to their success – and that shouldn't be an acceptable option.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2009

TO: Representative Wes Keller
Representative Bob Herron

FROM: Representative Les Gara

RE: Sectional Summary for CSHB126(EDC)

Section 1: Provides for the continuation of a public education in a student's school of origin for a homeless student under federal specifications. Provides exceptions for a move outside of a school district. Requires the transfer of a student's school records from the school of origin within seven days after notification of a school transfer. Modifies federal definition of homelessness to include students who are placed in out-of-home care by the state.

Section 2: Provides for a waiver of tuition, fees, and room and board expenses at a state-supported educational institution for a person who was placed in out-of-home care under specified circumstances for a person who is under 29 years of age. Provides an exception to educational institutions giving the waivers if insufficient funding is appropriated by the legislature.

Section 3: Defines out-of-home care for purposes of student loans and waivers.

Section 4: Replaces the term "foster care" for "out-of-home care" for purposes of grants and contracts.

Section 5: Amends the state's purpose and policy related to children to include education and intellectual development.

Section 6: Amends the legislative intent related to children to include providing a public education as provided under section 1.

Section 7: Replaces the term "foster homes" with "out-of-home care" for purposes of establishing medical assistance eligibility for certain persons and adds a category of eligibility for persons under 21 years of age who were in out-of-home care for a specified period of time on or after the person's 16th birthday.

Section 8: Defines "out-of-home care" for the purposes of medical assistance eligibility.

Section 9: Establishes mandatory monthly visits by social workers employed by the department to make monthly home visits, as described, to all children in the custody of the department.

Section 10: Amends the definition of "child" for purposes of the child in need of aid statutes.

Section 11: Defines "out-of-home care" for purposes of juvenile programs and institutions.

Section 12: Replaces the term "foster care" with "out-of-home care" for purposes of transition programs. Redefines the beneficiaries of those programs as individuals who have been in state custody and out-of-home care rather than "foster care".

Section 13: Increases the maximum eligibility age from 18 to 21 for purposes of the foster care transition program.

Section 14: Expands the recipients of state services to include children who were in state custody and placed in out-of-home care.

Section 15: Establishes a monetary stipend to be paid to persons who are eligible for the foster care transition program.

Section 16: Replaces the term "foster care" with "out-of-home care" for purposes of the transition program.

Section 17: Defines "out-of-home care" for the purposes of the transition program.

26-LS0309\P
Mischel
3/9/09

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 126(EDC)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GARA, Crawford, Kerttula

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to continuing the secondary public education of a homeless student;**
2 **relating to the purpose of certain laws as they relate to children; relating to tuition**
3 **waivers, loans, and medical assistance for a child placed in out-of-home care by the**
4 **state; relating to foster care; relating to children in need of aid; and relating to out-of-**
5 **home care transition to independent living."**

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

7 *** Section 1. AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:**

8 **Sec. 14.03.096. Continuing the public education of a homeless student. (a)**

9 Except as provided in (b) and (d) of this section, the governing body of a school
10 district shall comply with the requirements for continuing the public education of a
11 homeless student in the student's school of origin and for providing transportation
12 services for the remainder of the current school year or, if the student is attending
13 school for a summer term, for the remainder of the summer term, under 42 U.S.C.

1 11431 - 11435 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act
2 of 2001), as those provisions existed on February 1, 2009.

3 (b) The requirements in (a) of this section do not apply if the student moves to
4 a school district other than the school district in which the student's school of origin is
5 located.

6 (c) If a homeless student is transferred to a school other than the student's
7 school of origin, the school of origin shall provide a copy of the student's records to
8 the student's new school within seven school days after notification of the transfer.
9 The student's new school shall allow the student to attend school while awaiting the
10 transfer of records under this subsection.

11 (d) A school district is required to comply with this section only

12 (1) if the legislature appropriates funds for the purpose; and

13 (2) to the extent possible using funds appropriated for the purpose.

14 (e) In this section,

15 (1) "homeless student" has the meaning given in 42 U.S.C. 11434a for
16 "homeless child or youth," and the phrase "awaiting foster care placement" in that
17 definition shall be interpreted to include all students who are placed in out-of-home
18 care and in the custody of the Department of Health and Social Services under
19 AS 47.10.080(c) or who are committed to the custody of the Department of Health and
20 Social Services under AS 47.12.120(b)(1) or (3);

21 (2) "school of origin" means the school in which the student was last
22 enrolled.

23 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.43 is amended by adding a new section to read:

24 **Article 3A. Free Tuition for a Person Who Was in Out-of-Home Care.**

25 **Sec. 14.43.086. Free tuition and fees for a person who was in out-of-home**
26 **care.** (a) A person who enrolls as a student in good standing in a state-supported
27 educational institution in the state is entitled to a waiver of tuition, fees, and room and
28 board expenses if the person provides adequate proof that the person

29 (1) was in the custody of the state under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14;

30 (2) was placed in out-of-home care for a period of not less than six
31 consecutive months on or after the person became 16 years of age;

1 (3) has applied for educational grants or scholarships that the person is
2 otherwise eligible for as recommended by the educational institution;

3 (4) has applied for an available federal education loan; and

4 (5) is under 29 years of age.

5 (b) The amount of the waiver to which a person is entitled under this section is
6 the amount of unmet need for tuition, room, and board expenses, as determined by the
7 commission, after deducting funding for the school year from education loans, grants,
8 or scholarships received by a person eligible for a waiver.

9 (c) The proceeds of an education loan, grant, or scholarship received by a
10 person eligible for a waiver under this section must be paid to the educational
11 institution to offset the person's tuition, fees, and room and board expenses.

12 (d) A state-supported educational institution in the state is required to provide
13 a waiver under (a) of this section only if the legislature appropriates funds for the
14 purpose of offsetting waivers under this section. If an appropriation is not sufficient to
15 fully offset waivers for each person entitled to a waiver under (a) of this section, the
16 institution may offer full or partial waivers to eligible applicants as funding permits
17 and at the discretion of the institution.

18 * Sec. 3. AS 14.43.160 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

19 (7) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

20 * Sec. 4. AS 36.30.850(b)(42) is amended to read:

21 (42) grants and contracts with qualified entities for services under
22 AS 47.18.330 for the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition program;

23 * Sec. 5. AS 47.05.060 is amended to read:

24 **Sec. 47.05.060. Purpose and policy relating to children.** The purpose of this
25 title as it relates to children is to secure for each child the care and guidance,
26 preferably in the child's own home, as well as an education, that will serve the moral,
27 emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical welfare of the child and the best interests
28 of the community; to preserve and strengthen the child's family ties unless efforts to
29 preserve and strengthen the ties are likely to result in physical or emotional damage to
30 the child, removing the child from the custody of the parents only as a last resort when
31 the child's welfare or safety or the protection of the public cannot be adequately

1 safeguarded without removal; and, when the child is removed from the family, to
2 secure for the child adequate custody, education, and care and adequate planning for
3 permanent placement of the child.

4 * Sec. 6. AS 47.05.065 is amended to read:

5 **Sec. 47.05.065. Legislative findings related to children.** The legislature finds
6 that

7 (1) parents have the following rights and responsibilities relating to the
8 care and control of their child while the child is a minor:

9 (A) the responsibility to provide the child with food, clothing,
10 shelter, education, and medical care;

11 (B) the right and responsibility to protect, nurture, train, and
12 discipline the child, including the right to direct the child's medical care and
13 the right to exercise reasonable corporal discipline;

14 (C) the right to determine where and with whom the child shall
15 live;

16 (D) the right and responsibility to make decisions of legal or
17 financial significance concerning the child;

18 (E) the right to obtain representation for the child in legal
19 actions; and

20 (F) the responsibility to provide special safeguards and care,
21 including appropriate prenatal and postnatal protection for the child;

22 (2) it is the policy of the state to strengthen families and to protect
23 children from child abuse and neglect; the state recognizes that, in some cases,
24 protection of a child may require removal of the child from the child's home; however,

25 (A) except in those cases involving serious risk to a child's
26 health or safety, the Department of Health and Social Services should provide
27 time-limited family support services to the child and the child's family in order
28 to offer parents the opportunity to remedy parental conduct or conditions in the
29 home that placed the child at risk of harm so that a child may return home
30 safely and permanently; and

31 (B) the state also recognizes that when a child is removed from

1 the home, visitation between the child and the child's parents or guardian and
2 family members reduces the trauma for the child and enhances the likelihood
3 that the child will be able to return home; therefore, whenever a child is
4 removed from the parental home, the Department of Health and Social
5 Services should encourage frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation of the
6 child with the child's parent or guardian and family members;

7 (3) it is the policy of the state to recognize that, when a child is a ward
8 of the state, the child is entitled to reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate
9 treatment and that the Department of Health and Social Services as legal custodian and
10 the child's guardian ad litem as guardian of the child's best interests and their agents
11 and assignees, each should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the child is provided
12 with reasonable safety, adequate care, and adequate treatment for the duration of time
13 that the child is a ward of the state;

14 (4) it is in the best interests of a child who has been removed from the
15 child's own home for the state to apply the following principles in resolving the
16 situation:

17 (A) the child should be placed in a safe, secure, and stable
18 environment;

19 (B) the child should not be moved unnecessarily;

20 (C) a planning process should be followed to lead to permanent
21 placement of the child;

22 (D) every effort should be made to encourage psychological
23 attachment between the adult caregiver and the child;

24 (E) frequent, regular, and reasonable visitation with the parent
25 or guardian and family members should be encouraged; [AND]

26 (F) parents and guardians must actively participate in family
27 support services so as to facilitate the child's being able to remain in the home;
28 when children are removed from the home, the parents and guardians must
29 actively participate in family support services to make return of their children
30 to the home possible; and

31 (G) the child should continue to attend the child's school of

1 **origin as provided under AS 14.03.096;**

2 (5) numerous studies establish that

3 (A) children undergo a critical attachment process before the
4 time they reach six years of age;

5 (B) a child who has not attached with an adult caregiver during
6 this critical stage will suffer significant emotional damage that frequently leads
7 to chronic psychological problems and antisocial behavior when the child
8 reaches adolescence and adulthood; and

9 (C) it is important to provide for an expedited placement
10 procedure to ensure that all children, especially those under the age of six
11 years, who have been removed from their homes are placed in permanent
12 homes expeditiously.

13 * Sec. 7. AS 47.07.020(b) is amended to read:

14 (b) In addition to the persons specified in (a) of this section, the following
15 optional groups of persons for whom the state may claim federal financial
16 participation are eligible for medical assistance:

17 (1) persons eligible for but not receiving assistance under any plan of
18 the state approved under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act,
19 Supplemental Security Income) or a federal program designated as the successor to the
20 aid to families with dependent children program;

21 (2) persons in a general hospital, skilled nursing facility, or
22 intermediate care facility, who, if they left the facility, would be eligible for assistance
23 under one of the federal programs specified in (1) of this subsection;

24 (3) persons under 21 years of age who are under supervision of the
25 department, for whom maintenance is being paid in whole or in part from public
26 funds, and who are in out-of-home care [FOSTER HOMES] or private child-care
27 institutions;

28 (4) aged, blind, or disabled persons, who, because they do not meet
29 income and resources requirements, do not receive supplemental security income
30 under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title XVI, Social Security Act), and who do not
31 receive a mandatory state supplement, but who are eligible, or would be eligible if

1 they were not in a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility to receive an
2 optional state supplementary payment;

3 (5) persons under 21 years of age who are in an institution designated
4 as an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded and who are financially
5 eligible as determined by the standards of the federal program designated as the
6 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

7 (6) persons in a medical or intermediate care facility whose income
8 while in the facility does not exceed \$1,656 a month but who would not be eligible for
9 an optional state supplementary payment if they left the hospital or other facility;

10 (7) persons under 21 years of age who are receiving active treatment in
11 a psychiatric hospital and who are financially eligible as determined by the standards
12 of the federal program designated as the successor to the aid to families with
13 dependent children program;

14 (8) persons under 21 years of age and not covered under (a) of this
15 section [,] who would be eligible for benefits under the federal program designated as
16 the successor to the aid to families with dependent children program, except that they
17 have the care and support of both their natural and adoptive parents;

18 (9) pregnant women not covered under (a) of this section and who
19 meet the income and resource requirements of the federal program designated as the
20 successor to the aid to families with dependent children program;

21 (10) persons under 21 years of age not covered under (a) of this section
22 who the department has determined cannot be placed for adoption without medical
23 assistance because of a special need for medical or rehabilitative care and who the
24 department has determined are hard-to-place children eligible for subsidy under
25 AS 25.23.190 - 25.23.210;

26 (11) persons who can be considered under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(3) (Title
27 XIX, Social Security Act, Medical Assistance) to be individuals with respect to whom
28 a supplemental security income is being paid under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c (Title
29 XVI, Social Security Act) because they meet all of the following criteria:

30 (A) they are 18 years of age or younger and qualify as disabled
31 individuals under 42 U.S.C. 1382c(a) (Title XVI, Social Security Act);

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(B) the department has determined that

(i) they require a level of care provided in a hospital, nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded;

(ii) it is appropriate to provide their care outside of an institution; and

(iii) the estimated amount that would be spent for medical assistance for their individual care outside an institution is not greater than the estimated amount that would otherwise be expended individually for medical assistance within an appropriate institution;

(C) if they were in a medical institution, they would be eligible for medical assistance under other provisions of this chapter; and

(D) home and community-based services under a waiver approved by the federal government are either not available to them under this chapter or would be inappropriate for them;

(12) disabled persons, as described in 42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XIII), who are in families whose income, as determined under applicable federal regulations or guidelines, is less than 250 percent of the official poverty line applicable to a family of that size according to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and who, but for earnings in excess of the limit established under 42 U.S.C. 1396d(q)(2)(B), would be considered to be individuals with respect to whom a supplemental security income is being paid under 42 U.S.C. 1381 - 1383c; a person eligible for assistance under this paragraph who is not eligible under another provision of this section shall pay a premium or other cost-sharing charges according to a sliding fee scale that is based on income as established by the department in regulations;

(13) persons under 19 years of age who are not covered under (a) of this section and whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty line as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and revised under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

(14) pregnant women who are not covered under (a) of this section and whose household income does not exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty line as

1 defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and revised
2 under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

3 (15) persons who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer
4 and who are eligible for coverage under 42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XVIII);

5 (16) persons under 21 years of age who were in the custody of the
6 department under AS 47.10 or AS 47.14 and who were placed in out-of-home
7 care for a period of not less than six consecutive months on or after reaching 16
8 years of age.

9 * Sec. 8. AS 47.07.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

10 (o) In this section, "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

11 * Sec. 9. AS 47.10.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

12 (v) A social worker employed by or under contract with the department shall,
13 not less than monthly, conduct visits with a child committed to the custody of the
14 department under (c) of this section. The visits must be of sufficient substance and
15 duration to address issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the
16 child's safety, permanency, and well-being. The majority of the visits conducted under
17 this subsection must be at the location of the child's current placement. Nothing in this
18 paragraph creates a private right of action against the department or the department's
19 contractors. In this subsection, "visit" means face-to-face contact between social
20 worker and child.

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

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

23 (A) under 18 years of age;

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

27 (C) under 21 years of age if that person is living in out-of-
28 home care;

29 * Sec. 11. AS 47.10.990 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

30 (33) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

31 * Sec. 12. AS 47.18.300(a) is amended to read:

1 (a) The department, in coordination with local public and private agencies,
2 shall design, develop, and implement an out-of-home care [A FOSTER CARE]
3 transition program to provide support and services to individuals who

4 (1) reach or have reached the age of 16 or older while in state custody
5 and placed in out-of-home [FOSTER] care and have not yet reached 23 years of age;
6 and

7 (2) meet other eligibility criteria established by the department under
8 (b) of this section.

9 * Sec. 13. AS 47.18.310 is amended to read:

10 **Sec. 47.18.310. Program design.** The department, in coordination with local
11 public and private agencies, shall design the program as a continuation of the training
12 efforts related to independent living skills that were initiated for a child in state
13 custody who was placed in out-of-home care and [WHEN THE STATE FOSTER
14 CARE RECIPIENTS WERE] identified as being likely to remain in out-of-home
15 [STATE FOSTER] care until reaching not less than the age of 18. The program
16 design must require that program participants are directly involved in identifying the
17 program activities that will prepare them for independent living.

18 * Sec. 14. AS 47.18.320(a) is amended to read:

19 (a) Subject to the availability of an appropriation made for the purposes of
20 AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390, the program may provide

21 (1) education and vocational training;

22 (2) assistance in obtaining basic education and training;

23 (3) career and employment services;

24 (4) training in basic life skills;

25 (5) housing and utility assistance;

26 (6) mentoring and counseling; and

27 (7) other appropriate services to complement the efforts of former state
28 foster care recipients or a child who was in state custody and placed in out-of-
29 home care to achieve self-sufficiency.

30 * Sec. 15. AS 47.18 is amended by adding a new section to read:

31 **Sec. 47.18.335. Monetary living expense stipend.** The department shall

1 provide to an individual receiving services under the program a monthly stipend in an
2 amount set by the department that is not less than the daily rate provided to a licensed
3 foster parent for necessary living expenses. The stipend shall continue for a period of
4 not more than one year after the individual leaves out-of-home care. The department
5 may adopt regulations to implement this section.

6 * Sec. 16. AS 47.18.390(1) is amended to read:

7 (1) "program" means the out-of-home [FOSTER] care transition
8 program authorized under AS 47.18.300 - 47.18.390;

9 * Sec. 17. AS 47.18.390(3) is repealed and reenacted to read:

10 (3) "out-of-home care" has the meaning given in AS 47.14.400.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSHB126(EDC)
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(EDC)-DHSS-CSM-02-25-09 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 EDC Component Number: 2666

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	Appropriation Required	Information					
	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Personal Services							
Travel							
Contractual	204.2		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

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (
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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

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of CS HB 126 is to address the educational, medical, financial, and housing challenges that face youth as they transition out of foster care and to support those care providers that are willing to help them during that period of transition.

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. The following provides the estimated cost of ORCA updates that will be required to implement this bill.

Prepared by: Tammy Sandoval, Director Phone 465-3191
Division: Office of Children's Services Date/Time 2/20/09 12:00 AM
Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner Date 2/25/2009
DHSS Finance & Management Services

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CS HB 126 (EDC)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Requirement	Functional LOE (hours)	Development LOE (hours)	Total LOE (hours)	Cost
Update Services page for new services.	120	80	200	\$22,000.00
Update Education page with post-secondary educational institutions.	80	60	140	\$15,400.00
Update OHP for unlicensed independent living service categories and service types.	120	80	200	\$22,000.00
Update OHP for licensed service categories and service types over 18.	120	100	220	\$24,200.00
Update Ref Value for age change from 18 to 21	80	60	140	\$15,400.00
Update Eligibility page calculations for new age requirement.	180	160	340	\$37,400.00
Update Medicaid Eligibility page calculations for new page	180	160	340	\$37,400.00
Visitation Report	40	36	76	\$8,360.000
Hatch updates for OHP and Eligibility	40	160	200	\$22,000.00
Days:	960/8 = 120 days	896/8 = 112 days	1856/8 = 232 total days	Total Estimate \$204,160.00

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSHB126(EDC)
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(EDC)-DHSS-FCBR-02-25-09 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 EDC Component Number: 2236

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims		725.0		445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		725.0	0.0	445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2

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

	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
1002 Federal Receipts	0.0		55.6	73.9	73.9	73.9	73.9
1003 GF Match	725.0		389.6	371.3	371.3	371.3	371.3
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	725.0	0.0	445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2	445.2

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of CS HB 126 is to address the educational, medical, financial, and housing challenges that face youth as they transition out of foster care and to support those care providers that are willing to help them during that period of transition.

Sec. 11 amends AS 47.10.990 to change the definition of child to include under age 21 years if that person is living in out-of-home care as defined in AS 47.14.400.

Prepared by: Tammy Sandoval, Director Phone: 465-3191
Division: Office of Children's Services Date/Time: 2/23/09 12:00 AM
Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner Date: 2/25/2009
DHSS Finance & Management Services

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL NO. CS HB 126 (EDC)

2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Assumptions applied to this fiscal note:

Foster care reimbursement payments will be made available to care for children who remain in the custody of the state, who are age 18 through 20;

Approximately 15% (17 children) of the 110 that turn age 18 annually will chose to stay in foster care until age 19; 10% (10) to age 20; 5% to 21 (6); totaling 34 children. This is based simply on program experience and the assumption that most children will want to leave foster care at age 18, but that others who have stable homes will decide to stay with their foster families and that most of these children will attend post secondary education programs.

In addition to the 33 children who may wish to participate in the program in its initial year, approximately 12 of those special needs children who are 18 years of age, 6 at age 19, and 6 at age 20 will remain in care for 2010, bringing the total for 2010 to 57 children. This is based on the current numbers of children who age out with special needs. We estimate that 18 children with special needs age out annually, with 6 of them already staying in foster care until age 20, leaving 12 that may chose to stay in care.

For years 2011 - 2015, the number of participants has been reduced to 35, where it may stabilize because OCS speculates those children reaching the age of 19 or 20 will more likely opt to chose the monetary stipend in this bill.

Calculations are based on 360 days at an average base foster care base rate of \$35.33 a day $35.33 \times 30 = 1,060$. This calculation is used to equally distribute funding estimates, and makes very little difference to the resulting totals.

Currently, federal reimbursement for the extension of the foster program is not available, however, the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 includes the option to extend the assistance age through 20. This fiscal note assumes that option will be implemented when available October 1, 2010, therefore is available for the final three quarters of state fiscal year 2011 forward only.

SFY	# of Children	Age	Annual Cost Per Child	Total Est.	FFP	GF
2010	57	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$724,972	\$0	\$724,972
2011	35	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$445,158	\$55,631	\$389,527
2012	35	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$445,158	\$73,862	\$371,296
2013	35	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$445,158	\$73,862	\$371,296
2014	35	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$445,158	\$73,862	\$371,296
2015	35	18, 19, 20	\$12,719	\$445,158	\$73,862	\$371,296

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSHB126(EDC)
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): HB126CS(EDC)-DHSS-FP-02-25-09 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
Title: Foster Care/CINA/Education of Homeless RDU: Children's Services
Component: Family Preservation
Sponsor: Gara
Requester: House EDC Component Number: 1628

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims		1,971.4		953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		1,971.4	0.0	953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9

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

1002 Federal Receipts			119.2	158.3	158.3	158.3	158.3
1003 GF Match			834.7	795.6	795.6	795.6	795.6
1004 GF	1,971.4						
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	1,971.4	0.0	953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9	953.9

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of CS HB 126 is to address the educational, medical, financial, and housing challenges that face youth as they transition out of foster care and to support those care providers that are willing to help them during that period of transition.

Sec. 14 amends AS 47.18 by adding a new section which will allow a monetary stipend, equal to the applicable foster care reimbursement rate, to individuals who are leaving foster care for a 1 year period only.

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

Phone: 465-3191
Date/Time: 2/23/09 12:00 AM

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

Date: 2/25/2009

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB126(EDC)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Assumptions applied to this fiscal note:

The monetary stipends will be made available to children leaving out of home care, who are age 18 through 20, and does not need to be requested immediately upon leaving care;

70% of the 220 children currently participating in the Independent Living Program (IL) will become eligible for monetary stipends in FY 2010 (ages 18, 19, and 20) – equating to about 155 FTEs (full time equivalents), resulting in higher program costs the first year the stipends are available. FTEs help provide a more stable count as it is assumed that recipients will migrate on and off the program and not all will receive a full year's stipends;

After the first year of stipends, it is assumed that about 1/3 of the IL population will be eligible for and request monetary stipends annually equaling 75 FTEs, and that number will remain somewhat static;

Calculations are based on 360 days at an average base foster care base rate of \$35.33 a day $35.33 \times 30 = 1,060$.

Currently, federal reimbursement for the extension of the IL program is not available, however, the Adoption and Guardianship Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 includes the option to extend the assistance age through 20 under certain conditions. This fiscal note assumes those conditions will be established in regulation and when met, IV-E reimbursement will apply. This option is available October 1, 2010, therefore is available for the final three quarters of state fiscal year 2011.

	FTEs	Cost Per Month	Total Cost	Estimated FFP	GF
SFY 2010	155	\$1,060	\$1,971,414	\$0	\$1,971,414
SFY2011	75	\$1,060	\$953,910	\$119,207	\$834,703
SFY2012	75	\$1,060	\$953,910	\$158,273	\$795,637
SFY2013	75	\$1,060	\$953,910	\$158,273	\$795,637
SFY2014	75	\$1,060	\$953,910	\$158,273	\$795,637
SFY2015	75	\$1,060	\$953,910	\$158,273	\$795,637

(3) Local educational agency requirements

(A) In general

The local educational agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this part shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest -

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness -

(I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or

(II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

(B) Best interest

In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall -

(i) 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;

(ii) provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (E), to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local educational agency sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and

(iii) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the homeless liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii) assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal under subparagraph (E).

(5) Coordination

(A) In general

Each local educational agency serving homeless children and youths that receives assistance under this part shall coordinate -

(i) the provision of services under this part with local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and youths and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.); and

(ii) with other local educational agencies on interdistrict issues, such as transportation or transfer of school records.

origin, as determined in paragraph (3)(A), in accordance with the following, as applicable:

(I) If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located.

(II) If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the local educational agency of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another local educational agency, the local educational agency of origin and the local educational agency in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the local educational agencies are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

(2) COMPLIANCE-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each plan adopted under this subsection shall also describe how the State will ensure that local educational agencies in the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (7).

(B) COORDINATION- Such plan shall indicate what technical assistance the State will furnish to local educational agencies and how compliance efforts will be coordinated with the local educational agency liaisons designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii).

(3) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REQUIREMENTS-

(A) IN GENERAL- The local educational agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest--

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness-OR OUT OF HOME or BEST INTEREST CARE

(I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or

(II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

(B) BEST INTEREST- In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall--

(i) 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~~ guardian;

(ii) provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (C), to the homeless child's or youth's ~~parent~~ guardian, if the local

School District

educational agency sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and

(iii) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the school district homeless liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii) assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal under subparagraph

(E)

(C) ENROLLMENT- (i) The school selected in accordance with this paragraph shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.

(ii) The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.

(iii) If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records, in accordance with subparagraph (D).

(D) RECORDS- Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained--

(i) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district; and

(ii) in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

(E) ENROLLMENT DISPUTES- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school--

(i) the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;

(ii) the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision;

(iii) the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as described in paragraph (1)(C) as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and

(iv) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

(F) PLACEMENT CHOICE- The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

and the person in charge of children's services for DHHS

2

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:
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- ❖ 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.nklc.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).

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2009
TO: Representative Wes Keller
Representative Bob Herron
FROM: Representative Les Gara
RE: Departments affected by HB126

Department of Health and Social Services
Department of Education
University of Alaska

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

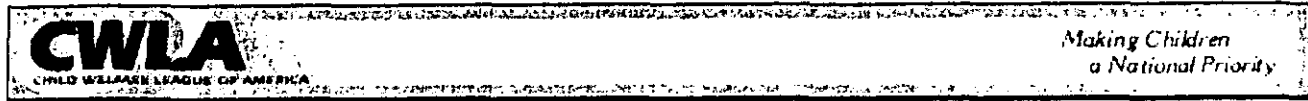
Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA)

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* Ametivier@casey.org



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

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California's Fostering Connections to Success Act and the Costs and Benefits of Extending Foster Care to 21*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the potential costs and benefits of allowing foster youth to remain in care until age 21, the policy encouraged by the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act and proposed in California's Assembly Bill 12, the California Fostering Connections to Success Act. Our estimates of the costs of extending care are based on the experience of Illinois in providing care past age 18 and data on public assistance receipt by youth aging out of foster care. Our estimates of the potential benefits of extending care are based on college participation rates at age 21 suggestive of the effect of extending care on post-secondary educational attainment as well as data on increased work-life earnings associated with post-secondary education.

Our analyses lead to the following conclusions:

- We estimate that the average per youth cost of extending foster to age 21, net cost offsets associated with public assistance utilization when youth cannot remain in care, to be approximately \$37,948. Available state-level data on public assistance utilization suggest that the net cost of extending care in California may be a few hundred dollars less than our estimate. We would expect the Federal government to pay \$13,282, the State of California \$9,866, and the placing county \$14,800 per person to extend foster care in California to age 21.
- Our estimates of the benefits of extending care until age 21 on bachelor's degree completion range from approximately \$27,000 to \$196,000. The wide range reflects different assumptions about 1) college graduation by former foster youth generally and 2) the persistence over time of the educational advantages associated with remaining in care. Our best estimate is that the increase in bachelor's degree completion predicted to result from extending care to age 21 would increase per-person work-life earnings by approximately \$92,000. This represents about \$2.4 for every dollar spent.
- Even if we assume no continuation of the favorable educational trajectory observed at age 21 associated with the Illinois policy of extending care, we estimate that the per-person work-life earnings of foster youth making the transition to adulthood would increase by an average of \$84,000 as a result of allowing foster youth to remain in care until they are 21 years old. This conservative estimate is based only on the expected effect of extending care on the likelihood of completing at least some college and represents a return of over two dollars for every dollar spent.

There is good reason to believe that the stark differences in college attainment that we observe at age 21 and attribute to the extension of foster care in Illinois will, over time, result in advantages in terms of both degree completion and sub-baccalaureate attainment. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the average increase in work-life earnings that would result from extending foster care is substantially higher than either of our estimates suggest, although how much higher is not clear. Our estimates suggest that the costs associated with extending foster care to age 21--an option that is now much less costly to states as a result of the Fostering Connections Act--are more than offset by the potential benefits to foster youth and society.

Introduction

Although they make up a relatively small proportion of all children in foster care, foster youth approaching the transition to adulthood have, over the years, attracted considerable attention from policymakers. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act has been amended three times in the past twenty-five years as part of an effort to better support young people making this transition. The shift over time in federal policy arguably reflects an evolving understanding of normative transitions to adulthood, growing knowledge of the particular challenges faced by transitioning foster youth, and changing views of the state's role and responsibilities as corporate parent. In practice, few states allow young people to remain in care much beyond their eighteenth birthday largely because, until now, federal reimbursement for foster care maintenance and administration costs has been limited to youth under age 18, or until age 19 in the case of youth who are likely to graduate from high school or an equivalent program before their 19th birthday (Bussey et al., 2000).

However, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Public Law 110-351, hereafter referred to as the "Fostering Connections Act"), passed unanimously in both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bush in October 2008, amends Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to allow states, at their option, to care for and support foster youth until the age of 21 provided that the youth are either 1) completing high school or an equivalency program; 2) enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school; 3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment; 4) employed for at least 80 hours per month; or 5) incapable of doing any of these activities due to a medical condition. Young people age 18 and older can be living independently in a supervised setting as well as placed in a foster home or group care setting, but the procedures afforded to state wards under age 18 (e.g., judicial or administrative case review every six months) would continue to apply. The Fostering Connections Act also requires child welfare agencies to help young people ages 18 and older develop a personal transition plan during the 90 days immediately before they exit care. The plan must be as detailed as the youth desires and include specific options for housing, health insurance, education, mentoring opportunities, continuing support services, workforce supports and employment services.

The Fostering Connections Act will begin reimbursing states that choose to extend foster care in fiscal year 2011 (i.e., October 2010).¹ In December 2008, California Assembly Bill 12, the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, was introduced. Among its provisions AB 12 would extend the California foster care program to age 21 in accordance with the provisions of the Fostering Connections Act. One factor that may help determine whether California policymakers decide to exercise this option is how the

¹ Depending on the state, the federal government provides reimbursement of 50% to 83% of foster care maintenance costs for children who are Title IV-E eligible, and states pay the rest. The federal portion or Federal Financial Participation (FFP) is the same as the state's Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and is based primarily on the state's per capita income. State with a higher per capita income have a lower FMAP. States are responsible for covering the entire cost of care for children who are not Title IV-E eligible. This would also apply to foster youth ages 18 and older.

benefits to foster youth and society compare with the costs to government. In this report, we provide some preliminary estimates of those benefits and costs using data from a variety of sources including the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth ("Midwest Study"), the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study and the US Census Bureau.² We conclude that the benefits to foster youth and society of extending care outweigh the costs to government by a factor of at least two to one.

The Midwest Study

The Midwest Study is a collaborative effort among the public child welfare agencies in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC), and Partners for Our Children (POC) at the University of Washington, Seattle. The Principal Investigator for the study, Mark E. Courtney, is currently Executive Director of POC and a Faculty Associate of Chapin Hall.

The Midwest Study is examining the transition to adulthood among foster youth from the three participating states who had entered care prior to their 16th birthday, were still in care at age 17, and whose primary reason for placement was not delinquency.³ Baseline interviews were conducted with 732 of the 758 young people eligible for the study, between May 2002 and March 2003 (63 from Iowa, 474 from Illinois, and 195 from Wisconsin) when they were 17 or 18 years old. That translates into a response rate of almost 97 percent. Eighty-two percent (n = 603) of this baseline sample (386 from Illinois, 54 from Iowa, and 163 from Wisconsin) were re-interviewed between March and December 2004 when nearly all (n = 575) were age 19. A third wave of survey data was collected between March 2006 and January 2007 from 81 percent (n = 591) of the baseline sample (364 from Illinois, 50 from Iowa, and 176 from Wisconsin) when almost all of the study participants were 21 years old. The interviews covered a variety of domains, including living arrangements, relationships with family of origin, social support, receipt of independent living services, education, employment, economic well-being, receipt of government benefits, physical and mental well-being, health and mental health service utilization, sexual behaviors, pregnancy, marriage and cohabitation, parenting, and criminal justice system involvement.

An important feature of the Midwest Study, and one that allows us to undertake this analysis, is that the three participating states have different child welfare policies regarding the age until which foster youth can remain in care. Foster youth in Iowa and

² This report was produced in response to a request from policymakers and advocates in California involved in developing legislation to extend foster care to age 21 in their state. The time constraints imposed by the legislative process meant that we needed to produce a best estimate of the potential benefits and costs associated with extending care using survey data from the Midwest Study. The authors of this report are engaged in a longer-term project aimed at a more thorough benefit-cost analysis of extending care than that reported here. We would like to thank the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation for their support of the work involved in producing this report.

³ For a more detailed description of the baseline study sample and procedures, see Courtney & Dworsky, 2006.

Wisconsin are generally discharged from care around the time of their 18th birthday and almost never after age 19. This is similar to what happens in most states. By contrast, Illinois is one of the few jurisdictions where foster youth can and routinely do remain in care until their 21st birthday.⁴ Despite some claims that many foster youth would choose not to remain under the care and supervision of the public child welfare agency and juvenile court beyond age 18 if given the opportunity, our data suggest that the opposite is true. Most of the young people from Illinois, who could have left care at any time after reaching the age of majority, were still in care on their 20th birthday, and many remained in care until age 21.

The Potential Costs of Extending Foster Care to 21

We estimate of the expected costs to government if foster care were extended until age 21 based on (1) the per day cost of caring for young people beyond their 18th birthday; (2) the average amount of time young people would remain in care after reaching age 18; and (3) the costs of public assistance that could be avoided if young people remained in care. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provided us with a weighted average of the per-day costs associated with different types of living arrangements (e.g., foster homes, supervised independent living, and subsidy payments for youth attending college) in 2007. Using their numbers, the average cost of keeping one Illinois youth in care after his or her 18th birthday is approximately \$20,800 per year.

We know from the Midwest Study that foster youth in Illinois are much older when they exit care than their counterparts in Iowa and Wisconsin. The average age at exit was 20 years old in Illinois compared with only 17.9 in Iowa and 17.8 in Wisconsin. This reflects the fact that all of the young people in the Wisconsin sample exited care before their 19th birthday as did nearly all of the young people in the Iowa sample. By contrast, more than half of the young people in the Illinois sample were still in care after their 20th birthday. Assuming that what happens in Illinois is similar to what would happen in other states if young people were allowed to remain in care until age 21, and that Iowa and Wisconsin are good examples of what happens in states that routinely discharge youth at age 18, extending care to age 21 would increase by about two years the average length of time states could expect to provide care. Multiplying the average estimated annual cost of extending care (i.e., \$20,800) by the average estimated increase in care years (2 years) produces an estimated average additional cost of \$41,600 per youth.

However, at least some of this cost would be offset by the avoidance of expenditures on public assistance. To estimate what those cost offsets might be, we draw primarily upon survey data collected from Midwest Study participants when they were 21 years old ($N = 555$). Table 1 shows both the percentage of study participants who reported that they

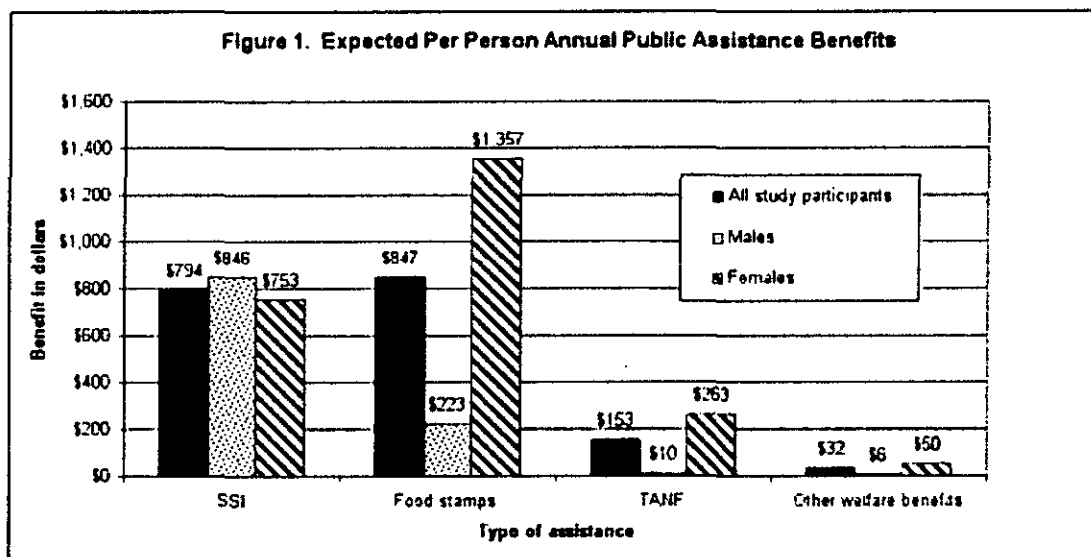
⁴ At the time these data were collected, Iowa foster youth could remain in care beyond their 19th birthday if the child welfare agency and juvenile court concluded that doing so would enable them to graduate from high school. However, only seven of the 63 Iowa youth in the Midwest Study sample were still in foster care at age 19.

were receiving public assistance as well as the mean benefit they were receiving each month.⁵

Table 1. Current Public Assistance Receipt at Age 21 (N = 555)

	% Receiving Assistance			Mean Monthly Benefit		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
SSI	11.9	12.8	11.2	\$555.90	\$550.59	\$560.00
Food stamps	32.5	9.9	50.2	\$217.24	\$187.33	\$225.31
TANF	2.9	0.4	4.8	\$440.13	\$200.00	\$456.13
Other cash welfare benefits	0.9	0.4	1.3	\$296.58	\$116.67	\$322.29

We used the reported monthly benefits to calculate what the annual benefits would be. If we assume that the percentage who were current recipients represents the probability of public assistance receipt, then the expected per person annual benefit is shown in Figure 1.



On average, Midwest Study participants received \$794 in SSI benefits, \$847 in food stamps benefits, \$153 in TANF benefits and \$32 in other welfare benefits, or a total of \$1,826 in benefits, over the course of a year. Because the young women were far more likely than young men to be custodial parents, and hence eligible for TANF, that value was considerably higher for females (\$2,423) and lower for males (\$1,083).⁶

Importantly, we limited our analysis to cash and “cash-like” (i.e., food stamp) benefits which were readily monetized. However, we know that some of these young people were receiving housing assistance (e.g., public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers) or benefits from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

⁵ “Other welfare benefits” would include SSI, general assistance, emergency assistance, or Cuban/Haitian or Indian assistance payments.

⁶ At age 21, 51 percent of the young women but only 11 percent of the young men were custodial parents.

If we had taken this other public assistance into account, the estimates shown in Figure 1 would have been higher.

Assuming average annual public assistance receipt of \$1,826 for each former foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 and assuming that these costs are defrayed for two years on average when young people remain in care, the expected net cost of extending care would be reduced by \$3,652, or from \$41,600 to \$37,948. This is not a large reduction relative to the overall cost, but it should be acknowledged.

Estimating the Cost of Extending Care in California

It is important to consider whether the cost of extending care would be significantly different in California than in the three Midwest Study states. In the simplest terms, the cost to the California child welfare system of extending foster care from age 18 to 21 is a function of (1) the average cost per day of caring for young people age 18 and older in various placements under the new policy, (2) the number of youth in each kind of placement, and (3) the average increase in the number of days young people would remain in care beyond their 18th birthday. Unfortunately, these figures are unknown. In the absence of California-specific data, we assume that the per-day costs of extending care in California would be similar to the per-day costs in Illinois and that young people in California would behave like their Midwest Study counterparts and remain in care an average of two years longer than they do now. In other words, our best estimate of the additional costs to the California child welfare system of extending care would be \$41,600 per youth.

Although state-level data on public assistance receipt among 18-21 year olds, the population most affected by extending foster care, are not readily available, the cost offsets associated with the avoidance of public assistance receipt may be somewhat larger in California than the Midwest Study data would suggest. Between 2000 and 2002, the average percentage of low-income children receiving TANF benefits was 18 percent in California compared with only 11 percent in Illinois, 8 percent in Iowa, and 6 percent in Wisconsin (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2004). By contrast, Food Stamp receipt among low-income children varied relatively little across these states (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2004). Given that TANF benefits accounted for less than one-tenth of our estimated cost offset of \$3,652 per youth, the additional per youth cost offset in California is unlikely to exceed a few hundred dollars.

The costs of extending foster care to age 21 under the *Fostering Connections Act* will be shared among federal, state, and county governmental entities. In thinking about the fiscal implications of AB 12, California policy makers need to consider several factors: the state's Title IV-E reimbursement rate, the percentage of foster youth who would be Title IV-E eligible, and how costs are shared between counties and the state.

In California, for example, the proportion of foster children currently eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement is approximately 70 percent. Assuming that this proportion would be the same for foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21, the federal government would pay half of what it costs the state to keep 70 percent of these older foster youth in care, or 35 percent of the total. In addition, California has a county-administered child

welfare system, and foster care costs are shared between counties and the state, with counties paying 60 percent and the state paying 40 percent.

What this means in practice is that for the 30 percent of young people who would presumably not be eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement, foster care costs would be split between the county, which would cover 60 percent, and the state, which would cover 40 percent. By contrast, for the 70 percent of young people who would presumably be eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement, foster care costs would be divided among the county, which would cover 30 percent, the state, which would cover 20 percent, and the federal government, which would cover 50 percent. The overall breakdown is as follows:

Table 2: Allocation of the Costs of Extending Care Across Levels of Government

	Title IV-E Ineligible		Title IV-E Eligible		Total
Federal		+	50% * 70%	=	35%
State	40% * 30%	+	40% * 50% * 70%	=	26%
County	60% * 30%	+	60% * 50% * 70%	=	39%
Total	30%	+	70%	=	100%

The actual costs borne by each level of government would, of course, depend on the number of young people who choose to remain in foster care (as well as the number of years they choose to remain). Assuming the percentages listed in Table 2 and a total cost per person of extending care of \$37,948, we would expect the Federal government to pay \$13,282, the State of California \$9,866, and the placing county \$14,800 per person to extend foster care in California to age 21. Assuming that most foster youth in transition in California will remain in the state for most if not all of their lives, it is worth noting that the potential benefits to individuals and society of extending care in California are likely to be concentrated in California, even though the federal government assumes a significant proportion of the costs of extending care.

The Potential Benefits of Extending Foster Care to Age 21

The starting point for our analysis of the potential benefits of extending foster care were the findings that we described in *When Should the State Cease Parenting? Evidence from the Midwest Study* (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007), namely, that allowing young people to remain in care until age 21 was associated with increased post-secondary educational attainment, delayed pregnancy, higher earnings, and a greater likelihood of receiving independent living services. Because rigorous empirical studies have yet to demonstrate that receipt of independent living services has long-term positive effects (Montgomery, Donkoh, & Underhill, 2006), we had initially planned to estimate the potential monetary benefits associated with increased post-secondary educational attainment, delayed pregnancy, and higher earnings. However, further consideration led us to focus exclusively on the first. Before discussing the potential monetary benefits due to increased post-secondary educational attainment, we explain our decision not to include the potential monetary benefits due to increased earnings and delayed pregnancy in our estimate.

As Courtney and colleagues reported, each additional year young people remained in care beyond their 18th birthday was associated with an increase in earnings of between \$470 and \$924 (depending on the statistical model that was used) during the year before the wave three interview at age 21 relative to mean annual earnings of \$6,894 (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007). At first glance it might make sense to try to estimate how this early earnings differential might translate into higher earnings over a young person's work-life. However, as we describe below, work-life earnings are strongly associated with educational attainment. Although our models predicting earnings during the year before the wave three interview controlled for differences in human capital (e.g., grade retention and reading level) and college aspirations at ages 17 or 18, they did not control for changes in educational attainment that occurred after the baseline interview. Thus, some or all of the earnings differences we observed at age 21 may reflect the effects of being able to remain in care on educational attainment. For this reason we chose not to include the earnings estimates reported in *When Should the State Cease Parenting* in our estimate of potential monetary benefits.

Courtney and colleagues also reported a relationship between remaining in care and delayed pregnancy (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007). Specifically, they found that being in care was associated with a 38 percent reduction in the risk of becoming pregnant between the baseline interview and the wave two interview at age 19. Given the wide range of challenges facing foster youth during the transition to adulthood and the likelihood that those who become parents during this period will do so under very unfavorable conditions (e.g., unstable or no employment, economic insecurity, no spouse or stable partner to assist with parenting), it seems reasonable to argue that this reduction in the risk of pregnancy associated with being in care would benefit the young women involved as well as society (Courtney et al., 2007). However, a review of the literature on teenage pregnancy revealed that almost all of the monetary benefits associated with pregnancy prevention comes from delaying births that would have occurred before age 18 until age 20 or 21 (Hoffman, 2006; Hoffman & Maynard, 2008). Delaying births to young women at ages 18 or 19 may have monetary benefits that have not been measured but we cannot quantify them at this point in time. Consequently, we chose not to include the potential monetary benefits of delayed pregnancy in our estimate of the potential benefits associated with extending foster care.

The Benefits of Extending Foster Care to Age 21 on Higher Education

The advantages of post-secondary education are well established. A bachelor's degree in particular is regarded as an investment that yields large returns over the life of an individual. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, young adults with at least a bachelor's degree earn significantly more than those with less education, and the gap in median income between college graduates and high school graduates has increased over time. In 2005, 25 to 34 year olds who had at least a bachelor's degree earned, on average, 61 percent more than those with only a high school diploma or GED (Planty, Provasnik, Hussar, Snyder, Kena, Hampden-Thompson, Dinkes & Choy, 2007).

We know that foster youth approach the transition to adulthood with significant educational deficits (Courtney, Terao, & Bost, 2004; Wolanin, 2005). For example, nearly two-fifths of Midwest Study participants were at least one year behind in school at age 17 or 18 (Courtney, et al., 2004), and one quarter did not have a high school diploma

or GED by age 21 compared to 11 percent of their peers in the general population (Courtney, Dworsky, Cusick, Havlicek, Perez, & Keller, 2007).

There is a lack of a consensus among researchers regarding college graduation rates for former foster youth, with estimates ranging from as low as 1 percent to as high as 11 percent (Emerson, 2006; Pecora, Williams, Kessler, Downs, O'Brien, Hiripi, & Morello, 2003; Wolanin, 2005). These estimates, however, are based on non-representative samples of former foster youth, nearly all of whom left care before federally-funded Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) were made available through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program in 2002. Moreover, the studies on which these estimates are based often assessed educational progress too early in adulthood to provide valid data on college degree completion. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that former foster youth lag considerably behind their peers with respect to post-secondary educational attainment.

The potential benefits of extending foster care resulting from an increase in educational attainment will depend on our answers to two questions:

- 1) What is the expected baseline rate of educational attainment for foster youth making the transition to adulthood if they are not allowed to remain in care until age 21?
- 2) How much higher do we expect that rate to be if young people are given the option to remain in care?

Our focus is on educational attainment beyond a high school diploma or the equivalent because the returns to post-secondary education are considerable.

Advantages of Extending Care Associated with a Baccalaureate Degree

We begin by estimating the potential benefits of extending care on bachelor's degree completion and the effects of BA completion on work-life earnings. Given the lack of consensus regarding college completion rates among former foster youth, we draw upon the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) to provide both lower and upper bounds.⁷ This study found that 29.6 percent of 26 year olds in the US had a bachelor's degree.⁸ However, that percentage varied considerably by socioeconomic status (SES).⁹ Most notably, only 7.3 percent of young people in the lowest SES quartile obtained a bachelor's degree by age 26. The NELS also found a relationship between number of

⁷ NELS involved a national probability sample of students from 1,057 public and private schools across all 50 states and the District of Columbia who were eighth graders in the spring of 1988 (US Department of Education, 2000).

⁸ Because the NELS estimates are based on educational attainment at age 26 and some individuals obtain college degrees after age 26, our figures most likely underestimate the percentage of adults who ultimately earn a bachelor's degree.

⁹ The NELS measure of SES is based on five equally weighted and standardized components: father's education, mother's education, family income, father's occupation, and mother's occupation.

“risk factors” and rates of college graduation.¹⁰ The graduation rate among young people with three or more risk factors was only 4.5 percent compared with 10.4 percent among young people with two, 22.0 percent among those with one, and 40.2 percent among those with none.

Most, but not all, transitioning foster youth are eligible for Title IV-E funding, which means that they come from low income families.¹¹ Moreover, they have typically been removed from homes because their safety and well being were significantly at risk. Averaging the NELS college graduation rates for those who were in the bottom SES quartile and those who had three or more risk factors, we estimate a lower bound for bachelor’s degree attainment of 5.9 percent. To estimate our upper bound, we use the average of the rate for the bottom three quartiles of the NELS SES distribution (18.6 percent) and the rate for youth with two risk factors (10.4 percent), or 14.5 percent. Taking the midpoint between these two estimates, we assume that approximately 10.2 percent of foster youth are likely to eventually earn a bachelor’s degree.¹²

Data from the Midwest Study indicate that college attendance among former foster youth is considerably higher in Illinois, where young people have the option to remain in care until the age of 21, than in Iowa and Wisconsin, where young people are routinely discharged from care on or close to their 18th birthday. Specifically, at age 21, young people who had aged out of foster care in Illinois were 2.25 times more likely than their counterparts from Iowa or Wisconsin to have completed at least one year of college (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007). Because between-state differences in foster youth populations could account for some or all of this difference in educational attainment, we estimated a multivariate model predicting at least one year of college completion that controlled for a range of foster youth characteristics that might be expected to be associated with college enrollment. However, controlling for these factors only *increased* the difference between states. In other words, despite exhibiting characteristics associated with *lower* rates of college enrollment, young people from Illinois had estimated odds of completing one or more years of college that were more than three times higher than the

¹⁰ Risk factors, measured in 8th grade, included living in a single-parent household; having a low-income family; having parents who had not graduated from high school; having an older sibling who dropped out of school; spending 3 or more hours alone at home after school per day; and having limited English proficiency.

¹¹ The Federal government reimburses states for the costs of foster care provided to children from low-income families through Title IV-E. For states to claim Title IV-E reimbursement, they must document that a child’s family would have been income-eligible for the state’s Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) under the criteria that existed before the program was eliminated in 1997. Although the percentage of children entering foster care who are Title IV-E eligible (commonly called the IV-E penetration rate) has always varied across states due to between-state differences in AFDC eligibility criteria, and have generally fallen since 1997, long-term national data on IV-E eligibility suggest that at least half of the children who enter foster care are IV-E eligible.

¹² Additional support for this figure comes from the Casey National Alumni Study (Pecora et al., 2003), the only study that provides reasonably recent data on college degree completion among former foster youth. Interviews were conducted with 1,087 young adults who had been in the care of Casey Family Programs in one of 13 states for at least one year between 1966 and 1998. Not all of these young adults had exited care by aging out, but most had spent time in care as adolescents and their average age at exit was 19 years old. Of the young adults who were age 25 or older, 10.8 percent had a BA degree. This is very similar to our midpoint estimate.

estimated odds of their peers in Iowa and Wisconsin (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007).

We base our estimates of the long-term benefits of extending care on bachelor's degree completion on this finding that former foster youth from Illinois were more than twice as likely as their Wisconsin and Iowa counterparts to have completed at least one year of college by age 21. Our best estimate is that allowing youth to remain in care is associated with a doubling of college degree attainment. This assumes that the difference in educational attainment that we observed at age 21 will be relatively stable over time. However, it could be argued that extending care has diminishing returns as young people can no longer rely on the state for care and supervision once they are 21 years old. We take this possibility into account by estimating the long-term benefits of extending care under the assumption that allowing youth to remain in care increases bachelor's degree completion by a factor of 1.5. It can also be argued that our best estimate is too low given the results of our multivariate analyses which suggest that extending care is associated with a tripling of the odds of completing at least one year of college. Thus, we also estimate the long-term benefits of extending care under the assumption that allowing youth to remain in care increases bachelor's degree completion by a factor of 2.5.

US Census Bureau data indicate that individuals with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn approximately \$2.1 million in 1999 dollars over the course of their work-life whereas those with only a high school diploma can expect to earn approximately \$1.2 million (Day & Newburger, 2002).¹³ This \$900,000 difference reflects the added value in work-life earnings of a bachelor's degree beyond the value of a high school diploma alone. To calculate the expected return in earnings if extending foster care to age 21 increased the rate of college graduation, we multiply the added value of a bachelor's degree by the difference between the predicted rate of college graduation under a policy of extended care and the estimated "baseline" rate of college graduation under the policy that currently exists in most states (i.e., discharge at age 18):

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Estimated additional earnings per person from extending foster care to age 21} = \\ & \text{Lifetime return in earnings for a bachelor's degree (\$900,000) } \times \\ & (\text{Predicted graduation rate if foster youth are allowed to remain in care until age 21} - \\ & \text{Estimated baseline graduation rate}) \end{aligned}$$

The results of these calculations are illustrated in Figure 2. Note that the estimated additional earnings are heavily influenced by our assumptions about the baseline bachelor's degree completion rate and the increased bachelor's degree completion rate associated with extending care. The upper line represents the return in dollars if extending care increased the bachelor's degree completion rate by a factor of 2.5 and the lower line represents the return if extending care increased the bachelor's degree completion rate by a factor of 1.5. Our most realistic estimates are represented by the middle line which shows what would happen if extending care doubled the bachelor's

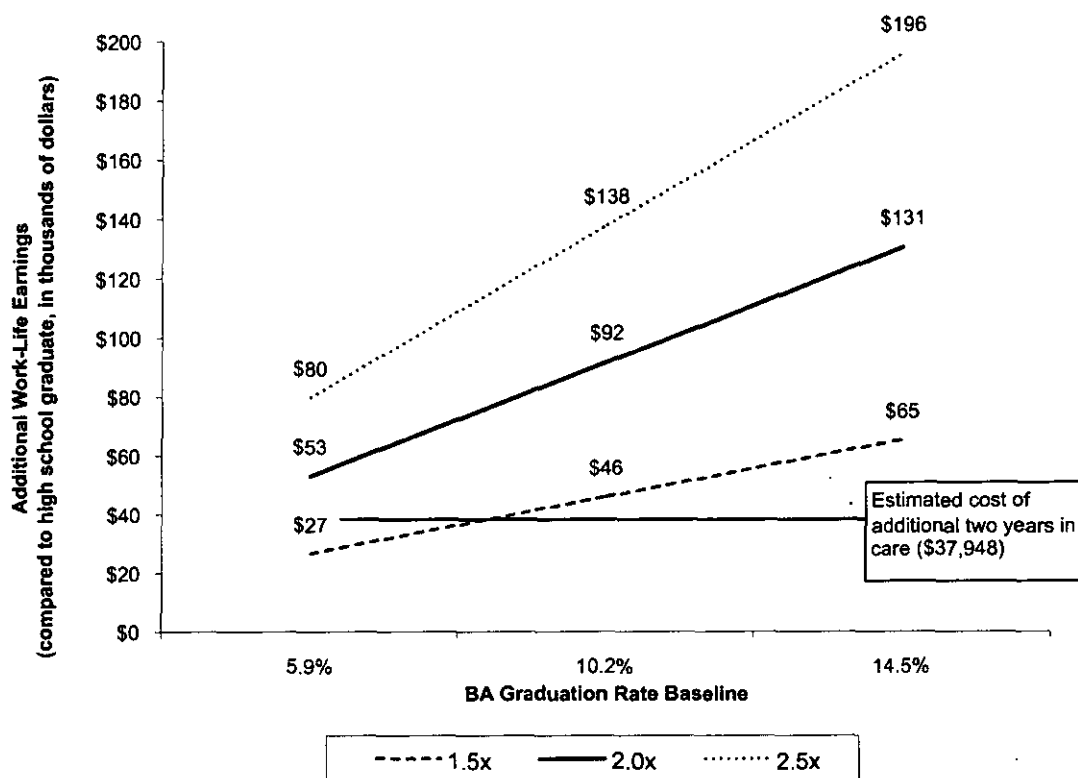
¹³ Day and Newburger (2002) estimated work-life earnings by summing age-specific average annual earnings for working people ages 25 to 64 years old. The total represents what similarly educated individuals could expect to earn, on average, in 1999 dollars, during a hypothetical 40-year working life.

degree completion rate---slightly lower than the difference observed in the Midwest Study.

Using our midpoint baseline college graduation estimate of 10.2 percent and our "best guess" that this rate will double if care is extended, we predict that 20.4 percent of foster youth would earn their baccalaureate degree if other states adopted Illinois' policy and allowed young people to remain in care until age 21. This is still considerably lower than the overall NELS estimate of 29.6 percent, but it does suggest that extending care would increase per person work-life earnings by an average of \$92,000.

Figure 2, which also shows the consequences of altering our assumptions regarding either the expected baseline rate of bachelor's degree completion or the effects of extending care on degree completion, indicates that the expected per-person work-life earnings increase associated with extending care ranges from a lower bound estimate of \$27,000 to an upper bound estimate of \$196,000. Note that for all but the estimate that assumes the lowest baseline graduation rate and the lowest projected increase in degree completion, the return in earnings exceeds the average cost of an additional two years in care (\$37,948), the average length of time that Illinois foster youth remain in care beyond their 18th birthday. Our midpoint (and most realistic) estimate translates into a benefit to cost ratio of \$2.4 dollars in increased earnings due to higher rates of degree completion for every dollar spent on extending foster care.

Figure 2: Estimated Earnings Benefits from Increased College Degree Attainment of Extending Foster Care to 21



Advantages of Extending Care Associated with Completing Any College

By limiting our estimates to the effects of completing a baccalaureate degree, we may be underestimating the benefits of extending foster care to age 21. Researchers have found “substantial and statistically significant” returns on sub-baccalaureate credentials, such as vocational certificates and associate degrees (Grubb, 1997, p241). For example, compared with individuals who have only a high school diploma, individuals with an associate’s degree earn an estimated 12 to 27 percent more (Surrette, 1997; Kane & Rouse, 1995). Moreover, according to Census Bureau estimates, completing any college increases work-life earnings by \$300,000, and completing an associate’s degree increases work-life earnings by \$400,000 relative to the work-life earnings of individuals with only a high school diploma (Day & Newburger, 2002).

This is important because data from the Midwest Study suggest that allowing youth to remain in care until age 21 is associated with significantly higher rates of college attendance (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007). Specifically, 58 percent of the former foster youth from Illinois had ever attended college by age 21 compared with only 29 percent of former foster youth from Iowa and only 31 percent of the former foster youth from Wisconsin. It is also associated with a greater likelihood of completing at least one

year of college. By age 21, 38 percent of the Illinois sample had completed at least one year of college compared with just 17 percent of the Wisconsin sample and 16 percent of the Iowa sample.

Given that post-secondary education can have benefits even if it does not result in a baccalaureate degree, and the fact that more follow-up data are needed to know whether Midwest study participants continue their educational trajectories, we also estimated the potential monetary benefits in terms of additional work-life earnings associated with extending care assuming that former foster youth terminate their education at age 21.¹⁴ This more conservative estimate represents the increase in per person work-life earnings we might expect due to the differences in educational attainment observed at age 21 between young people for whom remaining in care is an option and those for whom it is not:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Estimated additional earnings per person from extending foster care to age 21} = \\ & \text{Lifetime return in earnings for "some college" beyond HS (\$300,000) } \times \\ & (\text{Predicted college attendance if foster youth are allowed to remain in care until age 21} - \\ & \text{Estimated baseline college attendance rate}) \end{aligned}$$

Based on this formula, we estimate that the additional per-person work-life earnings associated with extending foster care would be \$84,000 (i.e., \$300,000 x (.58-.30)). In other words, even if former foster youth do not persist toward baccalaureate completion, the potential benefits of extending care exceed the costs by a factor of over 2 to 1.

Nonmarket Benefits of Post-Secondary Education

It is important to note that post-secondary education has a number of nonmarket benefits that are not easily monetized, at least not directly (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002; Baum & Ma, 2007). These benefits include improved personal and familial health, childbearing choices, and education choices of offspring. According to one estimate, if the "social gains from all of the categories of private nonmarket and external/public goods [...] are taken into account, their sum could equal estimates of the annual earnings impacts of an additional year of schooling" (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002, p118). Thus, if we were able to account for these nonmarket benefits in our estimates, extending foster care until age 21 could significantly increase the return to foster youth in transition and to society.

Limitations

Consideration of the conclusions reached in this report should take into account the limitations of the data and the methods that we used. First, our estimates of both the costs and benefits of extending care are largely based on observed differences between what happens in one state that allows young people to remain in care until age 21 and two other states with similar but not identical policies in which remaining in care until age 21 is not an option. Caution should be exercised in applying these estimates to other

¹⁴ Data from interviews conducted at age 23 will be available in summer 2009 and from interviews at age 25 in Spring 2011.

jurisdictions that take a different approach to extending care than Illinois or that provide a different set of aftercare services to support post-secondary education than either Iowa or Wisconsin.

Second, we attribute all of the between-state differences in post-secondary educational attainment that we observe at age 21 after controlling for foster youth characteristics measured at baseline to the fact that in one state people can remain in care until age 21 and in the two other states they cannot. This assumes that other between-state policy or contextual differences, as well as unmeasured between-state differences in foster youth characteristics, cannot account for the between-state differences we observed in post-secondary educational attainment. We are reasonably confident in making those assumptions for reasons discussed elsewhere (Courtney, Dworsky, and Pollack, 2007), but recognize the limitations of the non-experimental nature of our analyses.

Third, we rely on estimates of returns to post-secondary education among the general population (e.g., Day & Newburger, 2002). Our estimates will be biased to the extent that returns to post-secondary education are different for young people making the transition from foster care to adulthood.

Fourth, we have not accounted for all of the potential costs and cost offsets that might be associated with allowing young people to remain in care until age 21. For example, states' ability to extend Medicaid coverage to former foster youth until their 21st birthday will not change under the new law. Nonetheless, extending care could affect Medicaid expenditures. On the one hand, it could increase Medicaid expenditures if being in care results in greater attention to young people's health care needs and to a subsequent increase in their health care service utilization. On the other hand, it could improve young people's access to primary health care and hence reduce Medicaid expenditures on emergency treatment. Another cost that we have not taken into account is the cost of maintaining court supervision for as many as three additional years.

Finally, we have not exhausted the tools of benefit-cost analysis. For example, we have not adjusted for the fact that the data on which our estimates are based often come from different years. Our estimates of the costs of providing care and supervision to 18 to 21 year old foster youth in Illinois were based on 2007 data, our data on educational attainment at age 21 were collected in 2006, and our work-life earnings estimates were based on "present value" figures for 1999 (Day & Newburger, 2002). Although we do not believe that adjusting for these differences would substantively alter our conclusions, it could result in more precise estimates. Another convention of benefit-cost analysis is to allocate costs and benefits between society as a whole and the individuals affected by a policy or program. We have not tried to allocate our estimated benefits between individuals and society. Increased work-life earnings may appear to benefit only the individuals who are employed, but at least some of those earnings are returned to society in the form of tax revenues.

Conclusion

We analyzed the potential costs and benefits of allowing foster youth to remain in care until age 21, the policy option encouraged by the Fostering Connections Act and proposed in California's AB 12. We estimate that the average per youth cost of extending foster care for two years, net cost offsets associated with public assistance utilization when youth cannot remain in care, to be approximately \$37,948. This estimate is based on cost data from Illinois, observed between-state differences in the age at which youth left care in the Midwest Study states, and Midwest Study survey data on public assistance utilization. Available state-level data on public assistance utilization suggest that the net cost of extending care in California may be a few hundred dollars less than our estimate suggests. California-specific data pertaining to the costs of providing out-of-home care to transition-age youth and the length of time that youth are likely to remain in care beyond age 18 could improve our estimate, but in the absence of such data we believe it to be the best available.

Our analysis of the benefits of extending care focused on potential increases in work-life earnings owing to increased higher education. Our estimates are limited primarily by the fact that Midwest Study data are only available on the educational attainment of foster youth at age 21. However, even if we assume no continuation of the favorable educational trajectory associated with the Illinois policy of extending care, we estimate that the per-person work-life earnings of foster youth making the transition to adulthood would increase by an average of \$84,000 as a result of allowing foster youth to remain in care until they are 21 years old. This conservative estimate is based only on the expected effect of extending care on the likelihood of completing at least some college and represents a return of over two dollars for every dollar spent.

Our estimates of the benefits of extending care until age 21 on bachelor's degree completion are based on more tenuous assumptions because most young adults do not graduate from a four year college or university until they are least 22 years old. Our estimates of the increase in average per-person work-life earnings associated with the predicted increase in college graduation range from approximately \$27,000 to \$196,000. The wide range reflects different assumptions about 1) college graduation by former foster youth generally and 2) the persistence over time of the educational advantages associated with remaining in care. Our best estimate is that the increase in bachelor's degree completion predicted to result from extending care to age 21 would increase per-person work-life earnings by approximately \$92,000. This represents about \$2.4 for every dollar spent.

These two estimates of the benefit-cost ratio of extending care are not mutually exclusive. The former estimate assumes no benefit of extending care on college degree completion whereas the latter estimate does not take into account the positive effects of extending care on sub-baccalaureate attainment. There is good reason to believe that the stark differences in college attainment that we observe at age 21 and attribute to the extension of foster care in Illinois will, over time, result in advantages in terms of both degree completion and sub-baccalaureate attainment. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the average increase in work-life earnings that would result from extending foster care is

substantially higher than either of our estimates suggest, although how much higher is not clear. Future analysis of Midwest Study survey data being collected at ages 23 and 25 should reduce the need for speculation. In the meantime, our estimates suggest that the costs associated with extending foster care to age 21--an option that is now much less costly to states as a result of the Fostering Connections Act--are more than offset by the potential benefits to foster youth and society.

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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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Newsweek

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.

Daniel Heimpel
Newsweek Web Exclusive

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 to 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 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 years' 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.

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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



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

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:

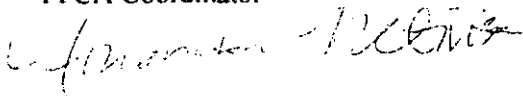
Your continued concern for Alaska's foster children and youth is admirable, and House Bill 126 demonstrates that concern.

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

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

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

The Average US Credit Score is 692. See Yours in Just 2 Easy Steps!

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 HHSS 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

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.

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

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

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.

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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.

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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 reinsert 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: 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