

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
SHEILA KUEHL

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Thirty-five thousand children and youth in Los Angeles County receive child welfare services from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Just over 17,000 of those children and youth live outside their homes in foster care or group home settings.

The mission of DCFS is to protect children from abuse and neglect, keep them safe in their parents' homes, or reunite families as soon as possible. To accomplish this mission, the County partners with our youth and birth and foster parents. As a partner, the County must ensure that our children are provided every reasonable resource, service, and program which will facilitate their development as healthy, educated, and self-sufficient young adults.

In supporting our children, the County has an obligation to ensure that our youth and resource families are reasonably informed of services, programs, and legislative mandates relating to foster parenting and adoption.

On January 1, 2017, the State of California began implementation of what has been described as "a colossal reform" of the foster care system.

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Mandates of Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) include, among others, that foster youth are provided core services which include: access to specialized mental health treatment, transitional support from foster placement to permanent home placement, connections with siblings and extended family members, transportation to school and other educational activities, and independent living skill building to older youth and non-minor dependents.

In addition to CCR, the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the State of California Welfare and Institutions Code, County, and DCFS policy, all include mandates and provisions to ensure our youth are protected and receive all necessary services.

How will a transitional aged youth, or new resource parents, or birth parents, or County social workers know, in plain language, about all the legislative mandates, obligated resources and services, or provisions created to ensure well-being and success?

As the largest child welfare system in the country, the County of Los Angeles should create its own Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services. Every child, youth, resource and/or birth parent, social worker, and community stakeholder needs to know about the mandates we must abide by, the resources and services that we must provide, and the rights of those that have been entrusted to our care.

Furthermore, a Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services increases transparency, and provides necessary information to foster youth and resource parents should they need to advocate for the services they are entitled to.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Commission

for Children and Families to convene a work group comprised of the following:

The Chief Executive Office, DCFS, the Office of Child Protection, County Counsel, Mental Health, Probation, Health Services, other relevant County departments and community stakeholder groups (such as First 5 LA, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, The Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel, The Children's Law Center, Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, Inc., and California Youth Connection), and at least two foster or former foster youth to report back to the Board of Supervisors in 120 days with:

1. A proposed Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services for Los Angeles County, to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
 - a. In crafting the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services, foster children, including Transitional Aged Youth, must be consulted and afforded an opportunity to provide input and contribute to shaping the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services.
 - b. The work group should review the State of California Foster Youth Bill of Rights, and any proposed changes resulting from Assembly Bill 1067. In reviewing the State of California Foster Youth Bill of Rights, the work group should consider whether there may be significant gaps and whether the County's bill should address some, or all, of those gaps.
 - c. The work group should review the California Welfare and Institutions Code, CRR Legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act, County and DCFS policy, and any other relevant statutes for the purpose of providing foster youth and resource parents with the most pertinent and relevant

foster and child welfare information.

- d. The Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services, should be crafted intentionally with and for foster youth, resource parents, and, in plain language, should also outline Federal, State and local rights, policies, and legislative, service, and programming mandates.
 - e. Topic areas for consideration should include, but are not limited to: education, mental and physical health and well-being, housing, income, employment, dependency court proceedings, visitation, reunification, adoption, and immigration status.
2. A proposed communication plan that utilizes web and print mediums to ensure that all current and future foster youth, resource parents, and social workers receive the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services.
 3. A plan for annual review and updating, as necessary, of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Services to ensure that it reflects the most current State and Federal legislation, County and departmental policy, and any other relevant statute or mandate.

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