

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS
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May 1, 2018

National Foster Care Month

The month of May is National Foster Care month. This year's theme is "It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections." In March 2018, in Los Angeles County, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provided child welfare services to 34, 205 children, with 21, 030 placed in out-of-home care. Nearly one-fourth of the children in out-of-home care, 5,463, were placed with a relative or non-relative extended family member. Los Angeles County is the largest child welfare system in the nation.

While the high rates of relative placement are beneficial for children and families, in many cases, relatives step up with little notice to care for their kin. Often, the relatives themselves are living on a fixed income, with numerous environmental and social stressors. The sacrifice made by countless relatives is therefore among the greatest gifts provided from one family member to another, and should be applauded. These relatives are the backbone of foster care and the system could not function without them.

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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Concurrently, individuals and couples across Los Angeles County, of various ages, genders, socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, religions and sexual orientations, are fostering. Whether the placement is short term or eventually adoptive, we need more residents in Los Angeles County to consider whether their home would make a suitable and loving home for a child. Others serve as mentors, workforce coaches, college counselors, or members of a 501(c)(3) board serving foster children. Each of these individuals stands to make a remarkable difference in the lives of the children they serve, and their willingness to share their time and energy with our County's children is deeply appreciated.

While challenges associated with a large system and the families within it abound, foster care has evolved and improved significantly over the years. Massive reforms are underway at the federal, state and local levels, and still, many children in foster care find long term success through foster care and its many programs, services, caregivers, individual providers/staff. While we must continue to emphasize child abuse and neglect prevention, we must also continue to implement best practices, and ensure that all children have safe and stable homes once they enter foster care.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors,

1. Proclaim the month of May "National Foster Care Month" in the County of Los Angeles;
2. Urge all residents and County employees, as well as community groups and organizations to take action to explore fostering and/or serving as a mentor to a child in foster care through organizations such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Alliance for Children's Rights.
3. Direct the Department of Children and Family Services to make available materials on the foregoing topics to the public and County employees for informational purposes.

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