



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

Correspondence Received

Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:				
5.		Favor	Cristina Alvarado	
			Eve A Valdez	
			GENEVIEVE M CLAVREUL	
			Jennifer Myers	I support this bill, because I am a former youth and was in dire need of stability. All I needed when I exited outta foster care was a voucher for housing. Now I'm stably housed and I want to make sure other youth are able to be stable.
			Julie McCormick	Children's Law Center of California ("CLC") submits this comment regarding Item No. 5, "Stabilization Support for Foster Youth." By way of background, CLC serves as court-appointed counsel for the over 21,000 children and youth under the jurisdiction of the juvenile dependency court system in Los Angeles County, as well as approximately 2,000 young people in Placer and Sacramento Counties. CLC thanks Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Barger and Horvath for their ongoing commitment to children and youth in foster care and appreciates their focus on identifying stable housing opportunities. In advocating for our Transition Age Youth ("TAY") clients, CLC has encountered barriers and delays particularly when our clients are seeking emergency housing. In these situations, a collaborative approach with the Department of Children and Family Services ("DCFS") as well as other community partners is essential in ensuring our mutual clients have safe and sustainable housing options especially those that are close to transitioning out of foster care with little to no housing leads or resources. While we are supportive of the direction of this motion, we would also like the issue of accessing emergency housing options to be addressed, given that DCFS is no longer able to utilize contracted hotels due to safety concerns and Temporary Living Settings ("TLS") can take up to several days to approve even when the youth's housing situation is urgent. We hope to work with Supervisors Barger and Horvath, as well as the agencies identified in the motion, to increase access to housing for TAY that will promote stability, connections, and community
			Mechille P Johnson	
			Pip Keogh	On behalf of the National Foster Youth Institute and the current foster youth and transition age youth (TAY) in LA County with whom the organization works, I would like to thank the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for the item introduced by Supervisors Barger and Horvath: Stabilization Supports for Foster Youth. The motion's focus on housing, resources for parenting foster youth, and



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support for accessing mental health care hones in on key issues that a coalition of foster youth advocacy organizations have identified as strategic intervention points for young adults who are exiting or preparing to exit LA County's foster care system.

As a leader in that coalition, NFYI works with individuals and families with lived experience in foster care to identify possible solutions to the complex issues faced by foster youth and TAY, and collaborate with the people who have the power and motivation to implement those policies.

Earlier this month, NFYI trained and supported a group of current and former foster youth who met with the LA County Board of Supervisors and department heads from across the county. These participants in the Los Angeles Foster Youth Shadow Day spoke about their challenges accessing housing vouchers; their interactions with the justice system; the impossible choices they've had to make when it comes to securing care for their own children; and their struggles with finding therapists equipped to help them with PTSD and other mental health issues that were often the result of a traumatic experience. The ensuing conversations after Shadow Day and this motion are reflective of NFYI's belief that when lived experience experts join together with decision makers committed to supporting our community's most vulnerable people, real change is possible.

We believe that these changes to child welfare policy will result in fewer unhoused Angelenos, less substance abuse, stronger families, sustaining career pathways — and most importantly, current and former foster youth who are thriving and accessing all of the incredible opportunities our county has to offer.

Beyond Stabilization Supports for Foster Youth, NFYI would like to ask that the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Children and Family Services continue to lead the community in destigmatizing mental health care and advocating for expanded options to affordable, accessible mental health services. NFYI recently collaborated on a white paper that found that talk therapy modalities are not universally effective and leave many youth with foster care experience in need of additional support. Alternative treatments such as art therapy, movement therapy, music therapy, and equine-assisted psychotherapy — already available to higher-income populations — show promise in treating mental health conditions often faced by youth with foster care experience. In order to achieve equitable access to mental health care, we must ensure that foster youth have the ability to choose from a wide array of mental health treatments. That policy brief is available [here](#).

I would also like to attach to this testimony policy recommendations developed by NFYI foster youth activist members in LA County that are focused on housing, mental health, juvenile justice, and resources for parenting youth. I encourage county officials and members of the public to consider these suggestions when considering how best to support children

			and youth in our community.
			<p>I thank the Board of Supervisors for their attention. And I'm deeply appreciative of the heartfelt and courageous testimonies of the 12 young people who shared their experiences with the Supervisors earlier this month at LA Foster Youth Shadow Day. Their individual stories shone a light on experiences and challenges faced by young people across our county who have been touched by the child welfare system. Our community and the most vulnerable people who live in it will benefit from greatly from their lived expertise.</p> <p>Pip Keogh Organizing Director & NFYI Los Angeles County Chapter National Foster Youth Institute</p>
		Item Total	7
Grand Total			7



NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

On behalf of the National Foster Youth Institute and the current foster youth and transition age youth (TAY) in LA County with whom the organization works, I would like to thank the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for the item introduced by Supervisors Barger and Horvath: *Stabilization Supports for Foster Youth*.

The motion's focus on housing, resources for parenting foster youth, and support for accessing mental health care hones in on key issues that a coalition of foster youth advocacy organizations have identified as strategic intervention points for young adults who are exiting or preparing to exit LA County's foster care system.

As a leader in that coalition, NFYI works with individuals and families with lived experience in foster care to identify possible solutions to the complex issues faced by foster youth and TAY, and collaborate with the people who have the power and motivation to implement those policies.

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Pip Keogh
Organizing Director & NFYI Los Angeles County Chapter
National Foster Youth Institute

HOUSING



We need to move away from the short-term mindset, transitional housing is not a safe, stable home for the future.

Iziko, LA Chapter Member



Housing instability is a critical issue for current and former foster youth. The most recent census of unhoused Angelenos found that LA County had 3,718 homeless transition-age youth, and around 50% of those leaving foster care will experience homelessness or housing instability.

NFYI members are engaging with local, state, and federal decision makers to create housing solutions and effective interventions.

Policy Asks:

- Protect and maintain vital housing support programs for current and former foster youth in local budgets. Invest in specific housing budget line items that focus on foster youth who often end up competing in lottery systems with the general population.
- Increase access to Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative vouchers. Our members report difficulties accessing vouchers or not being able to access them at all, and issues with housing authorities and landlords not accepting vouchers.
- Shift from a 'short-term mindset' and make permanent housing a requirement for transitions from care by placing accountability for housing on the system rather than youth - cases should not be closed until youth has secure housing. Increase housing competencies of all staff involved in child welfare and provide housing navigators. Create low-barrier, affordable, accessible, safe, stable, and intersectional housing specifically for foster youth. Remove age limits and requirements such as length of time in care to access housing supports outside of Coordinated Entry System (CES).

If you have any questions about our Los Angeles Policy Asks, please contact:
pip.keogh@nfyi.org



NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

REIMAGINING JUSTICE



If you're impacted by both the foster care system and the justice system, that's double the struggle!

Mehaa Martin, LA Chapter Member



About 90% of foster youth will come into contact with the justice system before and after leaving care, and youth of color are disproportionately impacted.

NFYI members are working to change policies, funding, and language in the justice system to end the foster care-to-prison pipeline and address the impact of the 'War on Drugs'.

Policy Asks:

- Provide trauma-informed training for police, social workers, attorneys, and judges on appropriate and fair responses to foster youth. Create community-based responses focused on wellbeing rather than over-policing foster youth.
- Address the 'double impact' for youth impacted by the foster care and justice systems who face barriers accessing housing, employment, and education. Create protected opportunities to transition successfully and live safe, healthy, and fulfilled lives.
- Change the baselines of probation/parole requirements for former foster youth. Foster youth in particular are more likely to struggle with accessing basics like phones, internet, or transportation to meet goals and time limits set for them.
- Increase pathways to justice careers and mentorship opportunities for former foster youth with lived experience to increase cultural competency, particularly those serving in communities of color.

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NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

MENTAL HEALTH



The daily impact of mental health issues marginalizes foster youth and disadvantages us even further. We need different support tools in our toolbox.

Abby Rubtsova, LA Chapter Member



Approximately 80% of former foster youth will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime. There is no “one size fits all” solution to this issue and we need to increase access to mental health care that is diverse and inclusive of all foster youth.

NFYI is leading research and education on the impact of alternative therapies and members are sharing their healing experiences with therapies that include art, music, and movement.

Policy Asks:

- Support the research and development of alternative mental health treatments for foster youth, establish guidance on best practices, and support funding to ensure full coverage of treatments.
- Provide high-quality mental health care by ensuring clinicians are fully qualified, licensed, and trained to a national standard with regular recertification required to work with people impacted by foster care. Create more pathways to mental health careers for people with lived experience of foster care via Title IV-E funding.
- Shift from “mandated therapy” to trauma-informed and healing-centered care. Provide training for therapists, police, social workers, attorneys, and judges on foster youth. Create community-based responses to mental health crises.
- Address gaps in mental health services when youth move placements or transition from care. Attach support to youth rather than location and extend access after care as transitions in particular can have a significant impact on mental health.

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NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS



Parenting and pregnancy can be challenging experiences for anyone, but they can be even more complicated for youth in the foster care system.

Elizabeth Villa, LA Chapter Member



Almost half of NFYI's Los Angeles Chapter members are parents and have identified gaps in services and support for parents impacted by the child welfare system.

NFYI members are developing policies to address the lack of opportunities to break cycles of system involvement and to create intergenerational wealth and healing for families to thrive.

Policy Asks:

- Prioritize housing for parenting youth who often fall between housing services, and implement a transitional housing program that prioritizes placing all parenting youth in housing before exiting the Independent Living Program (ILP).
- Create access to support within families and communities, such as support groups and peer navigators with lived experience of foster care who can support parents with accessing public benefits and other practical resources to support their families.
- Categorize childcare for parenting foster youth as a high priority to ensure they receive prompt and efficient service delivery, including priority placement on waitlists, and remove any eligibility barriers on childcare for all parenting former foster youth.
- Provide specialized mental health care and supportive wraparound care (independent of DCFS) that recognizes the unique needs of parenting foster youth.

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NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE



Children's Law Center of California

Excellence In Advocacy

*Serving Los Angeles, Placer and
Sacramento Counties*

Written Comment for Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor Motion, Item No. 5

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