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**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN
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Los Angeles County's Child Welfare's Response to the Proposed Budget

Earlier this month Governor Gavin Newsom (Governor) proposed his plan to fix the State's \$38 billion budget deficit. The Governor stated that this budget is a "story of correction, a story of normalization, after a period of [a] tremendous amount of distortion." Upon closer review, however, the Governor proposed four critical cuts that will impact the child welfare system and it is imperative that the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) and the County's Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Public Health (DPH) go on record to support the maintaining of funding for critical programs that ensure children and youth in foster care or at imminent risk of entering foster care have access to stability, trauma-informed supports, health care coordination and consultation, and housing needed to heal from abuse, neglect, and removal from their communities. The Governor's proposed 2024-25 budget threatens to harm children and youth the State has a moral and legal obligation to support and protect. This includes the elimination of dedicated supports and services provided by the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), elimination of the County's Public Health Nursing Early Intervention (PHNEI) Program, diversion of funding from the closure of the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program away from the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPFC), and cuts to the Housing Supplement for Foster Youth in Supervised

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Independent Living Placements (SILP).

The budget proposes to eliminate FURS (\$30 million General Fund ongoing), which was created by and for youth currently or formerly in foster care and their caregivers to provide critically needed, immediate, 24/7, individualized, trauma-informed support. Established in 2019 by Senate Bill 80, FURS is a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system designed to provide collaborative and timely state-level phone-based response and county-level in-home, in-person mobile response during situations of instability, to preserve the relationship of the caregiver and the child or youth. It is also a critical resource for promoting stability and healing, preventing criminalization, and linking youth and families who have experienced trauma to longer-term supports.

The proposed budget additionally eliminates the entire \$8.3 million annual allocation for the County's PHNEI Program, which aims to decrease child entry/re-entry into the child welfare and foster care system. This program, which may earn an additional federal Title XIX matching funds up to two - three times that annual allocation, has been envisioned as a means of strengthening health care and related coordination and support for families in which health issues endanger child health and safety and family stability, and, when fully staffed, is anticipated to serve up to 4,000 youth and their families.

The Governor's budget also proposes to divert \$20.83 million (from a total of \$33.96 million) resulting from the closure of the State's CHDP programs away from county HCPCFCs into other programs, and further restricts how those funds could be used in the management of

HCPCFC. CHDP had previously provided the administrative and other support for HCPCFC, but with CHDP due to sunset in June 2024, full funding previously dedicated to CHDP must be reinvested in HCPCFC to ensure the health care services for children in foster care remain whole.

The proposed budget also includes; (\$18.8 million in SGF) reduction in FY 2025-26 (and ongoing) for SILP, which could impact as many as 1,129 young people who rely on SILP funds for housing. As the largest child welfare system in California that transitions hundreds of kids out of foster care every month, while being in a homelessness crisis, losing any ongoing supplemental funding for SILP and not creating new opportunities for housing for emancipated foster youth would be dire to the County and only feed into the pipeline of homelessness and the unhoused population.

The Board recognizes the challenges associated with addressing the State budget deficit. However, the County must not address this shortfall at the expense of our children and youth in the child welfare and foster care system to whom the State has a legal and moral responsibility.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Public Health to:

- 1) Continue to incorporate collaborative Child Welfare advocacy towards maintaining State funding levels for dedicated supports and services for California's children and youth in foster care;
- 2) Advocate in support of the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), the County's Public

Health Nursing Early Intervention (PHNEI) Program, the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC), and Housing Supplement for Foster Youth in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP);

- 3) Oppose the proposed budget cuts to PHNEI and support the allocation of full funding resulting from the closure of Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program to HCPCFC, and local control of those funds in the management of HCPCFC;
- 4) Oppose the proposed budget cuts and advocate for local control for FURS; and to increase funding from the State for additional housing supports for youth exiting foster care while having discussions around fully realizing AB12 and the intent of that legislation.

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