



March 11, 2020

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes, Chair
Assembly Committee on Human Services
1020 N Street, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT AB 2880 (Ting) — Preventing Homelessness among Foster Youth in California

Dear Assemblymember Reyes,

On behalf of AdvancED Consulting, LLC, I am pleased to support Assembly Bill 2880, authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting, which would prevent California's foster care system from contributing to the growing homelessness crisis by establishing a THP-NMD Housing Supplement.

As the owner of management and Salesforce consultancy AdvancED Consulting, LLC, I have supported nonprofit and education organizations and community leaders across California since 2011. I am also the Founding Operations Director of the California College Guidance Initiative, a virtual statewide organization that uses www.CaliforniaColleges.edu to support 15% of California's 6th-12th grade students in developing informed, thoughtful postsecondary plans in collaboration with schools, districts, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations. I spent Fall of 2018 researching and writing content specific to supporting underserved populations like California's foster youth in accessing the support they need to not just survive in this state, but to thrive. Currently I volunteer with foster youth-serving organizations and programs like the Santa Clara County Commission on the Status of Women, ScholarMatch, Students Rising Above, San José Cal-SOAP, the Santa Clara County Girls Advisory Team, LEAD Filipino, American Association of University Women (AAUW) San Jose branch, and many more. **It is critical that we support these youth completely by reducing homelessness among former foster youth.**

California is in the midst of both a housing and homelessness crisis, reaching record levels in 2019. This crisis extends to youth in care, who live in the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD). This bill provides a THP-NMD housing supplement to prevent and reduce youth homelessness.

When California extended foster care to age 21 in 2010, it created THP-NMD as a supportive placement option for non-minor dependents. THP-NMD is operated by state-licensed social service agencies, which lease rental units on the open market, and provide them to foster youth. Agencies also provide a range of critical services that enable them to live semi-independently and make a safe supported transition from care.

County child welfare agencies pay THP-NMD providers a rate, set by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), which is adjusted annually based on the California Necessities Index.

In California, the cost of housing increased 64 percent since 2012, while the monthly THP-NMD rate has increased just 24 percent. A total of 2,023 youth resided in THP-NMD as of July 1, 2019, and nearly 1,200 of these young people live in counties with rent costs that are not covered by the current THP-NMD rate. The failure of the THP-NMD rate to keep pace with the cost of housing has had the following negative impacts on foster youth, as indicated by a June 2019 survey:

- ★ Increased homelessness: **341 youth were placed on a waiting list to participate in THP-NMD as of June 30, 2019**, a 64 percent increase since the year prior. Many of these youth are currently homeless, putting them at risk of trauma and victimization.
- ★ Exclusion of young parents and youth with disabilities: **Nearly one-third of THP-NMD providers reported limiting the number of high-need youth they serve to pay housing costs.** This includes serving fewer custodial parents and youth with disabilities. Both populations are at disproportionate risk of experiencing homelessness.
- ★ Fewer supportive services: As an increasing share of the THP-NMD rate is being diverted away from support services to pay for the cost of housing in higher-cost parts of the state, this leaves youth without the support they require and less prepared to make a safe, supported transition out of the foster care system. This disproportionately harms youth in high-cost counties, young parents, youth with disabilities and youth of color. **One in five THP-NMD providers reported reducing the level of supportive services to ensure adequate funds are available to cover housing costs.**
- ★ Geographic displacement: **High-cost counties place young people away from their communities of origin and their family members**, even though proximity to community supports positive outcomes for youth.

The approach of the THP-NMD Housing Supplement was strongly vetted and selected unanimously by a workgroup of stakeholders convened by the California Department of Social Services as required by previous legislation, SB 612 (2017, Mitchell).

AB 2880 would establish a supplement amount for both parenting youth and youth who are not parents, based each county's Fair Market Rent (FMR), a system set and used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Thus, supplement amounts would adjust annually, responsive to changes in the housing market.

AdvancED Consulting, LLC strongly supports this valuable legislation to prevent homelessness among California's foster youth. We urge you to vote aye on AB 2880. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Meredith Curry
Owner & Principal Consultant
AdvancED Consulting, LLC
www.advancedconsulting.org
P (408) 901-0290
E mer@advancedconsulting.org

Cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Human Services