



## AB 1979

### Increasing Housing Options in the Extended Foster Youth Program

#### SUMMARY

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AB 1979 increases the housing options available for foster youth in the Extended Foster Youth Program.

#### BACKGROUND

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California was one of the first states to opt in to the federal opportunity to create an Extended Foster Youth (EFC) Program. The EFC Program was created by AB 12 (Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010) and represented a historic expansion of services to foster youth, intended to improve outcomes for youth, who often faced enormous challenges as they emancipated from the foster care system at age 18 prior to the creation of EFC, often leading to poverty, homelessness and incarceration.

Chapin Hall's recent CalYouth study on the EFC Program has shown numerous benefits for participating young adults, including improvements in education, employment, housing, and social support, as well as reductions in pregnancy and criminal justice system involvement. However, that same study revealed that over 35 percent of youth reported they experienced homelessness while actively enrolled in extended foster care.

While California has created housing options to meet the varied needs of transition age youth (TAY) and non-minor dependents (NMD), there remains a shortage of adequate and affordable housing to support the full array of youth participating in extended foster care.

The purpose of EFC is to prevent homelessness among youth as they enter early adulthood. However, without sufficient supported housing, the vision of EFC is falling flat.

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AB 1979 will increase the housing options available to both TAY and NMDs by:

- Requiring counties to examine and report on their ability to meet the immediate housing needs of youth who are re-entering extended foster care or who are moving to a new placement;
- Promoting placement stability by requiring counties to "hold" placements for up to 14 days if the youth has provided notice of intent to return within 14 days or the program has reason to believe the youth will be returning; and,
- Allowing a transitional living setting approved by a county within the definition of a "supported independent living placement", or SILP, which gives counties greater discretion to provide young adults with alternative housing.

#### SUPPORT

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Alliance for Children's Rights  
Children's Law Center of California  
County Welfare Directors Association  
County of Santa Clara

#### STAFF

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