



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 29 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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May 8, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair
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From: Genevra Berger, Chair 
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

RE: SB 528 (YEE) DEPENDENTS: CARE AND TREATMENT:
MINOR AND NONMINOR DEPENDENT PARENTS

The Commission for Children and Families has long held a deep concern about the well-being of pregnant or parenting teens in the foster care system. The Department of Children and Family Services ("DCFS") estimates that there are approximately 300 pregnant teens in its system. Moreover, the recent passage of California Assembly Bill 12 of 2010 extended foster care to age 21. With that extension, Los Angeles County will undoubtedly see more pregnant or parenting youth in the child welfare system. Further support for this population is urgently needed. To assist that effort, California Senate Bill 528 ("SB 528"), sponsored by Senator Leland Yee, aims to provide an array of supportive and preventative services to pregnant or parenting teens in the foster care system.

SB 528 addresses four objectives:

- **Ensures access to education by prioritizing foster youth who are parents for subsidized child care.** Parenting and pregnant youth in foster care are 200% more likely to drop out of high school than to graduate, leaving them without the means to achieve economic stability. Reliable, affordable child care would remove a critical impediment to their further education.
- **Improves planning for pregnant and parenting foster youth.** Los Angeles County has piloted voluntary parenting teen conferences with expectant parents where resource specialists are available to advocate for the parenting youth's needs, including parenting classes, child care, counseling and educational supports. SB 528 would expand this successful model state-wide.

- **Provides age-appropriate reproductive health education.** SB 528 would require that dependent children ages 12 and older are informed by their social worker of their rights to receive age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive health and prevention of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Currently, social workers have no articulated responsibility to make this information available.
- **Directs the Department of Social Services** to collect data on parenting and pregnant youth. Currently the number of California youth in foster care who have children, either as custodial or non-custodial parents, is unknown. Knowing this information is necessary to understand the breadth of this issue and to develop appropriate policies to address it. SB 528 would require the State Department of Social Service to collect this vital information.

The Commission believes that these SB 528 services are essential to furthering self-sufficiency for young parents and are equally essential to preventing the children of these young parents from also becoming dependents of the court.

The bill moved out of the Human Services Committee on a bipartisan vote of 6-0, moved out of the Judiciary Committee on a vote of 6-1, and most recently on May 1, 2013, passed the Senate Education Committee with a vote of 8-0. We urge the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to instruct its legislative office to support SB 528.

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c: Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisor
Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Children's Deputies
County Counsel