



March 1, 2016



Assemblymember Tony Thurmond
Chair, Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health & Human Services
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: Support for “Bringing Families Home” Initiative (Housing for Homeless Child-Welfare-Involved Families)



Dear Chairman Thurmond:



We are writing in support of the “Bringing Families Home” proposal for a \$10 million state grant program to house child-welfare-involved families experiencing homelessness.



Though homelessness is not a basis for foster care placement, families who are homeless have much higher rates of child welfare involvement than other low-income families. Moreover, 30% of children in foster care cannot reunite with families because the family lacks safe, stable housing. Parents exiting incarceration similarly find challenges in reunifying with their children because they lack housing. Housing remains one of the largest barriers to reunification.



While some counties are creating pilots to house homeless child-welfare-involved families, county child-welfare and housing systems face challenges in building bridges between these two systems, and in “scaling up” housing opportunities. Focused resources spurring county investment would advance collaboration between child welfare and homeless systems, while ensuring children who could reunite with birth families are able to do so.



The \$10 million proposal would create a state grant to foster investment in housing and services for homeless child-welfare-involved families. The California Department of Social Services would select between two and four counties to participate through a competitive application process. The grants would match county dollars to pay for housing and services, as well as liaisons between child welfare and homeless systems.



This proposal promotes practices evidence shows work to avoid foster care placement and allow for reunification of birth parents and children in foster care. Data demonstrate getting families who are homeless into stable, safe, permanent housing prevents foster care placement and furthers reunification with birth families. Moreover, data demonstrate the housing strategies advanced in this proposal work to decrease rates of homelessness among families with children, and decrease foster care, incarceration, and health costs.





For these reasons, we strongly support this proposal and urge your support.

Sincerely,

Sponsors:

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Supporters:

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