

GOVERNOR NEWSOM VETOES BILL TO END STATE CONFISCATION OF FOSTER YOUTH SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Current Practice Exacerbates Youth Homelessness

(Sacramento) While across the nation, state and local governments are disavowing the unscrupulous and predatory practice of child welfare agencies secretly taking the private property of foster children - their Social Security disability and survivor benefits- to pay for their own care, California Governor Newsom vetoed AB 1512 (Bryan) late Sunday night making California the first state to land on the wrong side of a national trend to do away with this unconscionable policy. Governments that have acted in recent months to end the practice in whole or in part include [Arizona](#), [Connecticut](#), [Illinois](#), [Nebraska](#), [Oregon](#), [Hawaii](#), [New York City](#), [Philadelphia](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Washington D.C](#), and [New Mexico](#). [Washington](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), and [Texas](#) have either pending legislation, or plans to reintroduce bills.

"True, as mentioned in his veto message, California is facing budget challenges, but just as we believe the Governor wouldn't condone a practice of state workers secretly raiding the piggy banks of foster children to pay for their own room and board, we likewise cannot imagine he condones this form of theft either," said Amy Harfeld, National Policy Director at the Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law, co-sponsor of the bill.

Jessica Heldman, Fellmeth-Peterson Associate Professor in Child Rights at USD Law, adds, "Given the appalling rate of homelessness among former foster youth, there is no excuse for the continued unlawful taking of foster youth's benefits - funds that belong to them and can help shore up family stability if they return home or prevent falling into homelessness if they age out of care. We embrace the Governor's invitation to ensure this unanimously passed reform is incorporated into his January 2024 budget."

Representative Isaac Bryan, author of AB1512 [vows to reintroduce](#) this vital legislation next session.

The text of the bill can be found [here](#). The Governor's veto message can be found [here](#).

For more about the national effort to end this practice, go to:
<https://www.sandiego.edu/cai/advocacy/youth-benefits/>

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