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**Date**

The Honorable Corey Jackson, Chair  
Assembly Human Services Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 6120  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1512 (Bryan) Preserving Social Security Administration Benefits for Foster Youth – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Jackson:

On behalf of *organization name*, I write in support of AB 1512 (Bryan), which would require counties to conserve Social Security Administration benefits received by a youth in foster care for that youth's current and future needs, rather than using those benefits to pay for the cost of the child's foster care placement. AB 1512 also contains new screening, application, and notification requirements, continuing the Legislature's ongoing commitment to increasing the number of eligible foster youth linked to Social Security Administration benefits before their exit from care.

*Add information about your organization and connection to this issue.*

Around 4,000 young people "age out" of the California foster care system each year. Many of these youth lack family or other support networks to assist them, and many have not yet acquired the life skills necessary to become self-sufficient. Consequently, 25% of young adults who age out of foster care end up homeless or incarcerated within 18 months of exiting care.

Current and former foster youth may be eligible for one or more federal Social Security Administration (SSA) Benefits programs, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for individuals with disabilities and Social Security Survivors benefits for children and youth with a deceased parent. For these particularly vulnerable youth, SSA benefits offer an economic safety net during and after their time in foster care.

Although California has made significant efforts to link transition aged youth in foster care to SSA benefits, there is no requirement in state law for counties to regularly update the court, the youth themselves, or court-appointed counsel about the status of an SSA benefits application or how SSA benefits are used. In practice, youth may never learn that they were eligible for SSA benefits during or after their time in foster care, nor that the county was actually receiving benefits on their behalf, or know anything about how they were spent. Although there are several different types of savings accounts and trusts that could be established to put SSA benefits toward a youth's current unmet needs or future needs, youth in foster care typically are not informed

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about these options. As a result of that lack of knowledge and information sharing, this critical avenue of long-term support may be cut short.

AB 1512 would ensure that youth in foster care can access those critical federal funds by requiring counties to:

- Screen and apply for SSA benefits for youth in a timely manner upon entering care;
- Notify the youth and other stakeholders, such as the youth's attorney, about the status of their application and benefits;
- Identify caring adults who could serve as the youth's representative payee before applying to be appointed as representative payee; and
- Use any SSA funds received as the youth's representative payee in the best interest of the child for unmet current needs and/or conserve remaining funds in appropriate accounts for the child's future use.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 1512 (Bryan) and respectfully request your support for the bill.

Sincerely,

*Insert signature*

*Name*

*Organization*

cc: Members and staff, Assembly Human Services Committee  
Assemblymember Bryan