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PRESS RELEASE

Governor Signs Bill to Ensure Disabled Foster Children Don't Miss Out on Vital Services

AB 1089 protects vulnerable youth in foster care by ensuring they get developmental services in a timely manner after they change placements

Los Angeles, CA, (September 30, 2014) – On Monday, September 29, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law AB 1089 authored by Assemblymember Ian C. Calderon (D 57). AB 1089 will ensure young children with developmental disabilities and delays speedily resume services when they move to a new foster home in a different regional center service area. Many children in foster care have a developmental delay or disability. Early developmental services provided by regional centers, such as speech therapy and physical therapy, give at-risk infants and toddlers the best chance of overcoming disabilities in order to reach critical milestones and become kindergarten ready. Regional center services are equally critical for older disabled youth, who, for example, may rely on behavioral therapy in order to remain stable in a new placement.

“Foster youth are one of California’s most vulnerable populations. It is the State’s job to ensure that these youth receive much needed services to ensure their developmental progress,” said Assemblymember Calderon. “AB 1089 creates a uniform procedure for the transfer of foster youth’s case files in order to prevent unnecessary gaps in services.”

Before the passage of this law, there were no clear timelines that regulated the transfer of foster youth cases between regional centers. Some foster children were waiting several months for their services to be reinstated – threatening their developmental progress and the stability of their placement. Now, clear timelines promise that foster children will have services in place soon after moving to a new foster home.

“When foster children move to a new home, the caregiver doesn’t yet know how to meet their special needs – and it is in these transition periods that it is imperative that children get the regional center services they need,” said Angie Schwartz, Policy Director at the Alliance for Children’s Rights. “AB 1089 will ensure services are in place soon after a child moves, preventing our most underserved children from life-long delays and placement instability.”

AB 1089 requires communication between the county social worker and the regional centers to ensure that services are in place as soon as possible but no later than 30 days. Under this law, regional centers will be obligated to notify the court after 30 days if services aren’t in place. The bill had bipartisan support and will greatly benefit one of California’s most vulnerable populations.

“This creates a network of care for foster children with developmental delays and disabilities,” said Brian Capra, senior staff attorney at Public Counsel. “The regional centers, courts and county child

welfare agencies will work together to ensure that these children will no longer fall through the cracks and will continue to receive life-changing services no matter where they live.”

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The **Alliance for Children’s Rights** protects the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children and youth. By providing free legal services and advocacy, the Alliance ensures children have safe, stable homes, healthcare and the education they need to thrive. Since 1992, the Alliance has served 125,000 children ages 0-24, and favorably impacted thousands of children statewide through policy efforts. For more information, visit www.kids-alliance.org.

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