Place on your organization’s letterhead (if applicable) and **Please email to jennifer.swenson@asm.ca.gov and cc klewis@hrdowden.com;** **gabriella.ortega@asm.ca.gov****; a.kuncz@kids-alliance.org**

[Date]

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez

Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee

State Capitol, Room 2114

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 604 (Gipson) — Extended Foster Care Benefits for Nonminor Dependents**

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez,

[Your name or name of organization you are a part of] is pleased to support AB 604 (Gipson) which would ensure that our most vulnerable youth, who have been victims of abuse or neglect, are able to access extend foster care. AB 604 does this by removing administrative hurdles that a youth has no control over.

[insert organization’s background and/or any specific stories or cases to emphasize the need for this bill]

In 2010, California passed AB 12 so that current foster youth who weren’t ready for independence at age 18 could remain in care to continue access supports and services. However, through implementation, we continue to uncover new administrative barriers to youth being able to access this program.

There are many critical hurdles faced by youth who come to the attention of the child welfare system as they approach their 18th birthday. For example, the court process to declare youth a “ward of the court” can take up to nine months in some cases. If a youth turns 18 during this process, they are no longer a minor and no longer fall under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court – making them unable to go into extended foster care - even though the juvenile court did find that they were in need of out of home supervision and ordered them into a foster care placement before they turned 18.

AB 604 provides fixes to some the administrative barriers our system has encountered while trying to serve all youth that we intended to capture through AB 12.

[Your name or name of organization you are a part of] thanks you for your support of vulnerable children and youth in foster care and for your continued attention to their unique needs. We request an “aye” vote on AB 604 in order to ensure more foster youth are able to enter extended foster care and receive the supports and services they need to transition to adulthood.

Sincerely,

[INSERT Your Full Name]
[INSERT Your Title (if applicable)]

cc: Assemblymember Gipson