Place on your organization’s letterhead (if applicable) and **Please email to gabriella.ortega@asm.ca.gov; and cc s.ezrine@kids-alliance.org**

[Date]

The Honorable Kevin de **León**

California State Senate

State Capitol Building

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 604 – Nonminor Dependents: Extended Foster Care Benefits (SUPPORT)**

Dear Senate President pro Tempore de **León**,

[Name of organization] is pleased to support Assembly Bill 604 (Gipson), which would ensure that our most vulnerable youth, who have been victims of abuse or neglect, are able to access extended foster care. AB 604 does this by removing administrative hurdles over which a youth has no control over that currently serve as obstacles for their participation in extended foster care.

[Insert a one to three sentence paragraph about your organization]

California passed AB 12 in 2010 in order to ensure that foster youth who had not achieved permanency by age 18 were able to benefit from three additional years of supports and services, in recognition of the fact that very few young people, much less foster youth, are ready for independence at age 18. In the intervening years since extended foster care was implemented, we have discovered administrative barriers to youth being able to access the program as intended. AB 604 addresses these specific barriers to extended foster care so that the youth can participate in the program.

Current law allows a youth who exited foster care to adoption or guardianship to re-entry foster care after age 18 if the former guardian or adoptive parent ceases in supporting the youth. However, only youth whose Kin-GAP or AAP funding had been terminated were provided the right to re-enter. AB 604 ensures that youth who exited foster care to guardianship or adoption are able to exercise their existing right reenter care if they no longer receive support from their adoptive parent or guardian without first having to ensure the Kin-GAP or AAP funding has been terminated. These youth have no control over the county’s termination of the Kin-GAP or AAP funding and the fact that the county has not yet terminated funding should not be a bar to allowing the youth to petition the court for re-entry, a process that already takes several weeks to navigate.

Additionally, AB 604 addresses an unintended consequence for youth who are victims of human trafficking of having to choose between vacating their conviction or accessing extended foster care. Currently, youth who are victims of human trafficking are permitted to petition the court to vacate their juvenile adjudication. However the vacatur has the unintended effect of wiping out all associated court orders including the youth’s order for a foster care placement. AB 604 will ensure that a youth who has been adjudicated a delinquent as a result of human trafficking can avail themselves of their right to vacate that criminal conviction without also terminating their right to participate in extended foster care.

AB 604 impacts a small number of vulnerable youth who are being prohibited from participating in extended foster care for bureaucratic and administrative reasons. For these reasons, we urge you to give AB 604 your “aye” vote.

Sincerely,

[INSERT Your Full Name]

[INSERT Your Title (if applicable)]

CC: Assemblymember Gipson

Members of the California State Senate