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

[Date]

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker

California State Assembly

State Capitol Building

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 233 – Foster children: records (SUPPORT)**

Dear Speaker Rendon,

[Name of organization] is pleased to support SB 233 (Beall), which would clarify access to education records for caregivers of foster children, who are not the child’s education rights holder. This bill would ensure that foster children receive the educational supports they need through the appropriate sharing of information and coordination of educational services between Local Education Agencies, Child Welfare Agencies, education rights holders, and caregivers.

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

There are an estimated 60,000 students in foster care in California. Research shows that students in foster care have the poorest education outcomes of any student subgroup. According to WestEd’s landmark report, foster students had the lowest graduation rate and highest dropout rate of any student group in California.

A foster child’s caregiver plays a critical role in supporting the child’s educational needs. A caregiver is not always the child’s education rights holder, but all caregivers are responsible for supporting the child’s daily educational activities, such as helping with homework, monitoring grades, helping the child access tutoring and extra-curricular activities, or assisting with college applications. Caregivers are also responsible for providing the Child Welfare Agency with educational updates for the child’s health and education summary. Caregivers who are informed about a child’s educational needs can better support the child’s progress in school by ensuring there are no gaps in needed educational services. Under existing state and federal privacy laws, it is not clear what information Local Education Agencies can share with caregivers who are not education rights holders.

SB 233 would address this issue by clarifying that caregivers have the right and responsibility to access education records for the purpose of monitoring the child’s educational progress, updating and maintaining the child’s education records, and ensuring that the child has access to necessary educational services and supports. This bill would clarify which education records Local Education Agencies can share with caregivers regarding foster children’s educational progress, including, but not limited to, the child’s current grades, behavior, and attendance, and access to online parent-portals.

The California State Legislature can help ensure that the State’s children– our foster children – receive the educational supports they need to improve their education outcomes and close the achievement gap. The State has an obligation to provide our foster children with quality caregivers who are informed and engaged in helping them succeed in school and become productive members of our society.

We strongly support SB 233 and urge your “aye” vote on this important bill.

Sincerely,

[INSERT Your Full Name]

[INSERT Your Title (if applicable)]

 CC: Senator Beall

 Members of the California State Assembly