



# Children's Law Center of Los Angeles

Miriam Aroni Krinsky  
Executive Director

March 8, 2005

The Honorable Carole Migden  
State Capitol, Room 2059  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 436 (Migden) – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Migden:

The Children's Law Center of Los Angeles (CLC) is proud to be a co-sponsor of SB 436, critical legislation which will increase the availability of transitional housing for some of the most vulnerable youth in our state -- California's emancipating foster youth.

By way of introduction, CLC is a nonprofit organization that serves as the voice in the foster care system for over 20,000 dependent youth. Our committed attorneys and staff represent over 80% of the children in the Los Angeles County foster care system. As court appointed counsel for abused and neglected children, we seek to ensure that the system not only protects them while they are in our care, but also prepares them for successful transitions to adulthood.

It is well established that inadequate housing and other supportive services create often insurmountable barriers to success for young people emancipating out of foster care. While all emancipating youth need and deserve affordable safe housing, those teens who are themselves parents face even greater challenges. A teen parent with nowhere to live has far fewer options than other emancipating youth and the stakes are that much higher when homelessness can put at risk not simply the teen, but also that teen's child. Accordingly, we have targeted increased access to emancipation services and transitional housing as a priority action area for our agency.

SB 436 creates a multi-pronged approach to increasing the availability of transitional housing for emancipating foster youth. First, the bill seeks to increase utilization of existing Transitional Housing funds -- this will be accomplished through the release of clear guidelines regarding the process by which a county may access the funds. Second, the bill will put in place critical steps to address the unique needs of teen parents by recognizing that their housing needs are acute. By requiring that transitional housing programs established under Section 11403.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code set aside a number of units for pregnant or parenting emancipated foster youth, the legislature will send a clear message that we must pay attention to the safety of these young families.

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Thank you for authoring this important legislation. Passage of SB 436 will go a long way toward ensuring that emancipating foster youth are given a real chance at successful independence and self-reliance.

Sincerely,

Miriam Aroni Krinsky  
Executive Director

Leslie Starr Heimov  
Director, Special Projects

cc: Amy Freeman, Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance  
Michele Byrnes, Honoring Emancipated Youth

(Insert your address)

(Insert Date)

The Honorable Joe Simitian  
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee  
State Capitol Room 4062  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
*Via Facsimile: (916) 323-4529*

RE: SUPPORT SB 436 (MIGDEN)

Dear Senator Simitian,

(insert your name or your organization's name) is pleased to support SB 436, authored by Senator Carole Migden. SB 436 will expand access to housing and support services to pregnant and parenting former foster youth through the Transitional Housing Placement Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (commonly referred to as THP+).

Every year, approximately 5,000 youth graduate from California's foster care system and many leave without the resources, skills or abilities to find safe housing and support. Statewide, 65% of emancipating youth do not have stable housing when they leave foster care.

THP+ is the only state-funded program to provide essential housing and support services for transitioning youth who age out of our foster care system. In some of the implemented models, youth pay rent with gradually tapering subsidies and receive assistance with items such as grocery vouchers, transportation, educational and vocational skills so that they achieve self-sufficiency. The goal of the program is to help youth achieve independence and have the opportunity to start down the path toward a stable adult future.

These youth are at a critical juncture where they can either wind up homeless, out of school and unemployed, or with adequate housing and other types of support they can become healthy and productive citizens. Emancipated foster youth with children face particular challenges in achieving self-sufficiency, and existing services are woefully inadequate. SB 436 demonstrates a commitment to these young families.

We urge the committee and others in the legislature to support SB 436. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Insert your name and address)

cc: Senator Carole Migden fax (916) 445-4722