


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: August 25, 2017

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 17-0002-S102
Assignment No.: 17-08-0844

SUBJECT: Resolution (Harris-Dawson – Bonin – Wesson) to SUPPORT H.R. 2952 (Bass)

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Harris-Dawson – Bonin – Wesson) to include in the City's 2017-18 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for HR 2952 (Bass), the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2017, which supports the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

SUMMARY

The Resolution (Harris-Dawson – Bonin – Wesson) states that 427,910 children were in foster care in the United States as of 2015. The Resolution advises that numerous studies have confirmed that mentors have a positive impact on children's lives, including youth in foster care. Children who have mentors are less likely to skip school and are more likely to enroll in college. Such children also benefit from improved relationships with adults, experience fewer disciplinary referrals, and have more confidence to achieve their goals. Mentoring programs for children in foster care are unique and require that mentors be provided specialized training and support.

Currently pending in the United States House of Representatives, is H.R. 2952 (Bass), the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2017, which would support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care. According to Resolution, H.R. 2952 would ensure that youth in foster care have access to supportive adults as they transition into adulthood.

The Resolution recommends that the City support H.R. 2952.

BACKGROUND

The Public Policy Institute of California has reported that there are approximately 60,000 children under the age of 18 who are in foster care throughout the state. Children are placed into foster care because county welfare departments, in coordination with juvenile dependency courts, have determined that they could not live safely with their birth parents. Over half (54 percent) of children first removed from their parents leave foster care within a year. Youth transitioning out of foster care and into adulthood are vulnerable to poverty, unemployment, homelessness, early parenting, mental health issues, and low educational attainment.

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (Department) oversees the care of foster youth in the County. The County contracts with approximately 45 foster family agencies that provide care for foster children throughout the county. While youth can transition out of foster care at age 18, the Department is able to provide care to youths until the age of 21. According to the Los Angeles Times, studies have found that California youths who stayed in

foster care past age 18 are more likely to enroll in college while being less likely to rely on public assistance or to become homeless.

According to Psychology Today, a five-year study found that children with mentors were more confident and had fewer behavior problems. In addition, National Mentoring Partnership studies have found that foster youth in mentoring programs experience increased quality of life, increased completion of high school, and reduced depression and anxiety.

H.R. 2952

HR 2952, also known as the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2017, would establish a new grant program for the mentoring for children in foster care. The bill would appropriate \$15 million in 2018 and 2019. In future Fiscal Years, the bill would appropriate as much funding as necessary to support the operation of the program. Nonprofit organizations, child welfare agencies, local education agencies, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and faith-based organizations would be eligible to apply for grant funds. Grant fund recipients would be required to recruit mentors, develop training programs for mentors, and provide activities for participating youths.


HR 2952 is consistent with existing City programs in support of youth development.

Departments Notified

Economic and Workforce Development
Housing and Community Investment

Bill Status

06/20/2017 Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.



Brian Randol
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Resolution
2. Text of HR 2952.

SMT:MF:PS:BMR

RESOLUTION

RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must first have been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, as of 2015, 427,910 children were in foster care in the United States, with an average age of 8.6 years; and

WHEREAS, many children who exit the foster care system at age 18 are not adequately prepared for adulthood; these young adults are at high risk of experiencing poor educational outcomes, unemployment, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have confirmed the positive impacts of mentors on children's lives, including youth in foster care; and

WHEREAS, children who have mentors are less likely to skip school and are more likely to enroll in college; and

WHEREAS, such children also benefit from improved relationships with adults, fewer disciplinary referrals, and more confidence to achieve their goals; and

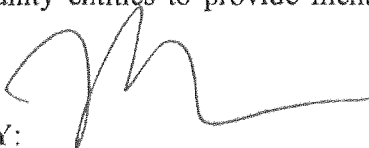
WHEREAS, mentoring programs for children in foster care are unique and require that mentors be provided specialized training and support; and

WHEREAS, currently pending in the United States House of Representatives, is H.R. 2952 (Bass), the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2017, which would support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care; and

WHEREAS, through the award of grants to eligible agencies, H.R. 2952 would ensure that youth in foster care have access to supportive adults as they transition into adulthood;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.R. 2952 (Bass), the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2017, which supports the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

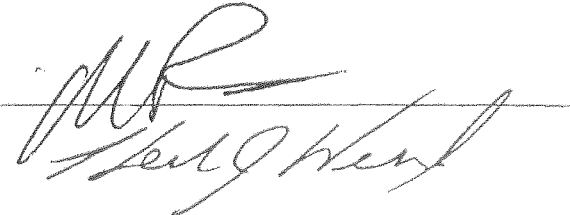
PRESENTED BY:



MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District

AUG - 1 2017

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2952

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 2017

Ms. BASS (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. LEE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. LANGEVIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Foster Youth Men-
5 toring Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Research shows that mentors make a dif-
2 ference in children’s lives. At-risk youth who have
3 mentors are 55 percent more likely to enroll in col-
4 lege. Students who meet regularly with their men-
5 tors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to
6 skip a day of school. Youth who have mentors are
7 also 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership po-
8 sition.

9 (2) Children that have mentors have improved
10 relationships with adults, fewer disciplinary refer-
11 rals, and more confidence to achieve their goals.

12 (3) In 2014, 415,129 children were in foster
13 care. Of those children 62,108 were between the
14 ages of 10 and 13, and 120,567 were between the
15 ages of 14 and 18.

16 (4) Mentoring programs that serve foster chil-
17 dren are unique and require additional consider-
18 ations, including specialized training and support
19 necessary to provide for consistent, long-term rela-
20 tionships for children in care.

21 (5) Mentoring programs can be used as an ef-
22 fective preventative or intervention strategy to sup-
23 port positive outcomes for foster youth.

1 **SEC. 3. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN FOSTER**
2 **CARE.**

3 Subpart 2 of part B of title IV of the Social Security
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 629 et seq.) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 **“SEC. 439A. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN**
7 **FOSTER CARE.**

8 “(a) **PURPOSE.**—It is the purpose of this section to
9 authorize the Secretary to make grants to eligible appli-
10 cants to support the establishment or expansion and oper-
11 ation of programs using a network of public and private
12 community entities to provide mentoring for children in
13 foster care.

14 “(b) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

15 “(1) **CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.**—The term
16 ‘children in foster care’ means children who have
17 been removed from the custody of their biological or
18 adoptive parents by a State child welfare agency.

19 “(2) **MENTORING.**—The term ‘mentoring’
20 means a structured, managed program—

21 “(A) in which children are appropriately
22 matched with screened and trained adult volun-
23 teers for consistent relationships;

24 “(B) that can include direct one-on-one,
25 group, peer, or a combination of these types of
26 mentoring services;

1 “(C) that involves meetings and activities
2 on a regular basis; and

3 “(D) that is intended to meet, in part, the
4 child’s need for involvement with a caring and
5 supportive adult who provides a positive role
6 model.

7 “(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
8 tity’ means—

9 “(A) a nonprofit organization;

10 “(B) a State child welfare agency;

11 “(C) a local educational agency;

12 “(D) an Indian tribe or a tribal organiza-
13 tion; or

14 “(E) a faith-based organization.

15 “(c) GRANT PROGRAM.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
17 out a program to award grants to eligible entities to
18 support the establishment or expansion and oper-
19 ation of programs using networks of public and pri-
20 vate community entities to provide mentoring for
21 children in foster care.

22 “(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To be eli-
23 gible for a grant under paragraph (1), an eligible en-
24 tity shall submit to the Secretary an application con-
25 taining the following:

1 “(A) PROGRAM DESIGN.—A description of
2 the proposed program to be carried out using
3 amounts provided under this grant, including—

4 “(i) the number of mentor-child
5 matches proposed to be established and
6 maintained annually under the program;

7 “(ii) the targeted age range of youth
8 to be served by the program;

9 “(iii) such information as the Sec-
10 retary may require concerning the methods
11 to be used to recruit, screen, support, and
12 oversee individuals participating as men-
13 tors, and to evaluate outcomes for partici-
14 pating children, including information nec-
15 essary to demonstrate compliance with re-
16 quirements established by the Secretary for
17 the program; and

18 “(iv) such other information as the
19 Secretary may require.

20 “(B) TRAINING.—An assurance that all
21 mentors covered under the program will receive
22 intensive and ongoing training in the following
23 areas:

24 “(i) Child development, including the
25 importance of bonding.

1 “(ii) Family dynamics, including the
2 effects of domestic violence.

3 “(iii) The foster care system and fos-
4 ter care principles and practices.

5 “(iv) Recognizing and reporting child
6 abuse and neglect.

7 “(v) Confidentiality requirements for
8 working with children in foster care.

9 “(vi) Working in coordination with the
10 child welfare system.

11 “(vii) Other matters related to work-
12 ing with children in foster care.

13 “(C) SCREENING.—An assurance that all
14 mentors covered under the program are appro-
15 priately screened and have demonstrated a will-
16 ingness to comply with all aspects of the mentor
17 program, including—

18 “(i) a description of the methods to be
19 used to conduct criminal background
20 checks on all prospective mentors; and

21 “(ii) a description of the methods to
22 be used to ensure that the mentors are
23 willing and able to serve as a mentor on a
24 long-term, consistent basis.

1 “(D) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION; COORDI-
2 NATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—A dem-
3 onstration that, in developing and implementing
4 the program, the eligible entity will, to the ex-
5 tent feasible and appropriate—

6 “(i) consult with—

7 “(I) public and private commu-
8 nity entities, including religious orga-
9 nizations and Indian tribal organiza-
10 tions and urban Indian organizations;
11 and

12 “(II) family members of children
13 who may be potential clients of the
14 program;

15 “(ii) coordinate the mentoring pro-
16 gram and the eligible entity’s activities
17 with other Federal, State, and local pro-
18 grams serving children and youth; and

19 “(iii) consult and coordinate with ap-
20 propriate Federal, State, and local correc-
21 tions, workforce development, and sub-
22 stance abuse and mental health agencies.

23 “(E) EQUAL ACCESS FOR LOCAL SERVICE
24 PROVIDERS.—An assurance that public and pri-
25 vate entities and nonprofit community organiza-

1 tions, including religious organizations and In-
2 dian organizations, will be eligible to participate
3 on an equal basis.

4 “(F) RECORDS, REPORTS, AND AUDITS.—
5 An agreement that the eligible entity will main-
6 tain such records, make such reports, and co-
7 operate with such reviews or audits as the Sec-
8 retary may find necessary for purposes of over-
9 sight of project activities and expenditures.

10 “(G) EVALUATION.—An agreement that
11 the eligible entity will cooperate fully with the
12 Secretary’s ongoing and final evaluation of the
13 program under the plan, by means including
14 providing the Secretary access to the program,
15 the program’s staff, program-related records
16 and documents, and each public or private com-
17 munity entity receiving funding under the plan.

18 “(3) CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING
19 GRANTS.—In awarding grants under this subsection,
20 the Secretary shall take into consideration—

21 “(A) the overall qualifications and capacity
22 of the eligible entity and its partners to effec-
23 tively carry out a mentoring program under this
24 subsection;

1 “(B) the level and quality of training pro-
2 vided to mentors under the program;

3 “(C) evidence of coordination of the pro-
4 gram with the social services and education pro-
5 grams of the State or political subdivision;

6 “(D) the ability of the eligible entity to
7 provide supervision and support for mentors
8 under the program and the youth served by
9 such mentors;

10 “(E) the number of children in foster care
11 served by the State or political subdivision; and

12 “(F) any other factors that the Secretary
13 determines to be significant with respect to the
14 need for, or the potential success of, carrying
15 out a mentoring program under this section.

16 “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that
17 receives a grant under this subsection may use such
18 funds to—

19 “(A) develop and carry out a training pro-
20 gram and ongoing support for mentors;

21 “(B) recruit mentors for children in foster
22 care; and

23 “(C) provide activities that will help the
24 development of a child in foster care who is
25 participating in the program.

1 “(5) GRANT AMOUNT.—In awarding grants
2 under this subsection, the Secretary shall scale
3 grants to account for the eligible entity’s annual
4 budget and capacity.

5 “(6) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year
6 after the date of enactment of this section, and an-
7 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare and
8 submit to Congress a report that includes the fol-
9 lowing with respect to the year involved:

10 “(A) A description of the number of pro-
11 grams receiving grant awards under this sub-
12 section.

13 “(B) A description of the number of men-
14 tors who serve in the programs described in
15 subparagraph (A).

16 “(C) A description of—

17 “(i) the number of children in foster
18 care who participated in mentoring pro-
19 grams funded by the grant funds under
20 this subsection;

21 “(ii) data on the academic achieve-
22 ment of the children in mentoring pro-
23 grams funded by the grant funds under
24 this subsection; and

1 “(iii) the number of children in foster
2 care on waiting lists for such mentoring
3 programs.

4 “(D) Any other information that the Sec-
5 retary determines to be relevant to the evalua-
6 tion of the program under this section.

7 “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
8 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
9 this section—

10 “(A) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years
11 2018 and 2019; and

12 “(B) such sums as may be necessary for
13 each succeeding fiscal year.”.

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