

Print on Letterhead

Submit the letter to leg.unit@gov.ca.gov and copy erica.harnik@sen.ca.gov and quirka@clccal.org

September 1, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California
1021 O Street, Room 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1197 (Alvarado-Gil) – Letter of Support

Dear Governor Newsom:

[Organization name] strongly supports SB 1197, which will help improve access to critical developmental services for vulnerable children and youth in the foster care system.

Add information about your organization and connection to this issue.

It is well known that families are the best place for children to grow up; unfortunately for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities placed in the foster care system due to abuse, neglect or exploitation, family home opportunities can be severely limited. Far too often, these dual system-served children end up in costly congregate care settings because kinship and nonrelative foster care placements do not receive necessary services.

SB 1197 will further California's goal of providing coordinated, timely, and trauma-informed services to dual system-served youth by clarifying that children and non-minor dependents in foster care are not excluded from in-home respite services provided by regional centers. In-home respite services are simple, yet essential supports provided by regional centers which assist family members to enable a child with developmental disabilities to remain living in the home. Regional centers are currently required to provide in-home respite services to relatives and non-relatives; however, the statute providing for these service authorizations contains a legislative drafting error that has resulted in uneven implementation of the law. Due to the confusion, regional centers are inconsistent and some deny authorizing crucial in-home respite hours, leaving caretakers without needed support and forcing temporary, or worse, permanent placement changes for youth. The

September 3, 2024

Page 2 of 2

clarifying language of SB 1197 will help our most vulnerable children get the services they need at home where they are comfortable and allow caretakers the time to take care of themselves, resulting in increased placement stability and better outcomes for our children.

Additionally, as child welfare law has developed through legislation over the past decade on Continuum of Care Reform and Extended Foster Care, the statute warrants updates to reflect the current legal framework, accounting for “resource families” and “non-minor dependents.”

For these reasons, [Organization name] respectfully requests your signature on SB 1197.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

cc: Senator Alvarado-Gil