



**STATEMENT BY  
YOUTH LAW CENTER AND CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION**

In Support of Trailer Bill Language in the 2025 State Budget for the California Department of Social Services' Restructured Foster Care Rates Proposal

May 15, 2024 - Yesterday, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) proposed revisions to the new [foster care rates structure](#) that would dramatically improve the lives of youth in foster care in our state. Our organizations, The [Youth Law Center](#) and [California Youth Connection](#), are proud to lend our enthusiastic support.

These new rate structures would greatly help youth in the foster care system by providing funding based on the individual needs of each child, not the placement type, allowing more youth to live in families, rather than institutions.

At its core, the CDSS proposals focus on youth's strengths and would use a process to identify and support those strengths rather than fixating on their challenges.

We are especially heartened that CDSS listened to feedback from foster youth and updated their proposal to make it easier for older youth to access urgently needed financial assistance. The new trailer bill language not only reduces the administrative burden for these young adults but eliminates it entirely for those in extended foster care who are living independently. Importantly, based on current rates, this proposal would almost double the total funding going directly to these youth, finally making it possible for foster youth in independent living settings to afford housing and avoid homelessness.

The new rate structure would also allow youth in family settings to receive the same type of supports they previously would only be able to receive in a group setting or institution. We hope this allows more youth to receive the supports needed to thrive with their own relatives and in their own communities.

In a tough budget year, CDSS is proposing almost a billion dollars in additional funding annually for California's 50,000 youth in foster care. We applaud the Governor and CDSS for such a bold investment in our most vulnerable youth, and for creating a rates structure that recognizes and supports the strengths of the children and families they serve.

Youth have become powerful agents of change for themselves and future generations. By actively engaging with youth for their ideas and feedback, CDSS has taken a significant step towards ensuring that its policies are informed by research as well as by the expertise of youth with the real-life experiences in foster care.

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The **Youth Law Center** (YLC) is a non-profit law firm that advocates to transform foster care and juvenile justice systems across the nation so that every child and youth can thrive. For over 40 years, the Youth Law Center has pursued policy and advocacy to protect the rights of youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and to promote positive youth connections to community and family. The Youth Law Center is headquartered in San Francisco, California, with staff across the country. [www.YLC.org](http://www.YLC.org).

**California Youth Connection** (CYC) is a youth-led non-profit advocacy organization that empowers foster youth ages 14–24 to build leadership skills and forge supportive relationships while advocating for child welfare reforms that directly impact their lives. California Youth Connection is headquartered in Emeryville, California with Regional Offices in Fresno, Los Angeles, and Sacramento. [www.calyouthconn.org](http://www.calyouthconn.org).