



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

SCR-137 Foster Care Month. (2017-2018)

SHARE THIS:  

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 137

CHAPTER 78

Relative to Foster Care Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 29, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 137, Lara. Foster Care Month.

This measure would recognize the month of May 2018 as Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges that children, and particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, face in the foster care system, as specified.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Foster Care Month has been observed in the United States during the month of May every year since 1988 and continues to be recognized and celebrated across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Foster Care Month is a time to recognize that we each can play a part in enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care by acknowledging foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the foster care system is to provide children with a safe, loving, and stable home while away from their parents or guardians; and

WHEREAS, Every child unable to live with his or her parents or guardians is entitled to a supportive and affirming foster care placement, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, there were over 437,000 youth living in foster care nationwide and approximately 54,685 in California; and

WHEREAS, Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are overrepresented in the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, A 2014 study of foster youth in Los Angeles County found that 19 percent of foster youth over 12 years of age identified as LGBTQ and that the percentage of LGBTQ youth in foster care is up to twice that of LGBTQ youth who are not in foster care; and

WHEREAS, Some LGBTQ youth enter foster care for similar reasons as non-LGBTQ youth, such as abuse, neglect, and parental substance abuse, but many LGBTQ youth have further challenges because they have experienced the additional trauma of

having been rejected or mistreated by their families and at school because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ youth in foster care have a higher average number of placements and higher likelihood of living in a group home than their non-LGBTQ peers because of the high level of bias and discrimination that they face and the difficulty of finding affirming foster placements; and

WHEREAS, One study showed that 70 percent of LGBTQ youth in foster care reported experiencing violence based on LGBTQ status, 100 percent reported verbal harassment, and 78 percent of youth were removed or ran away from placement due to hostility toward their LGBTQ status; and

WHEREAS, California has laws in place that explicitly protect LGBTQ youth in the foster care system from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, Only 23 other states and the District of Columbia have similar nondiscrimination laws or policies in place to protect LGBTQ youth in foster care; and

WHEREAS, There is a shortage of qualified individuals willing to foster a child in the child welfare system and, consequently, thousands of foster children nationwide lack a stable and safe home; and

WHEREAS, Children “who age out” of the foster care system without a permanent family are less likely to graduate high school or attend college and are at a high risk of unemployment, depression, poverty, homelessness, incarceration, and early parenthood; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, approximately 21,000 youth aged out of the foster care system nationwide; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, 4,271 youth in the California foster care system aged out of the foster care system without finding a permanent family; and

WHEREAS, A disproportionate number of LGBTQ children age out of foster care as compared to their non-LGBTQ peers; and

WHEREAS, Discriminatory treatment of willing and qualified LGBTQ individuals and couples continues to create barriers that prohibit them from fostering and adopting children and limits the number of homes available to children in the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, Same sex couples are six times more likely to foster children and at least four times more likely to adopt than their non-LGBTQ counterparts; and

WHEREAS, California laws explicitly protect LGBTQ individuals who wish to serve as foster parents from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, Only two other states and the District of Columbia have passed similar laws that explicitly protect LGBTQ adults who are willing to provide foster care homes from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, While the State of California has reduced barriers for LGBTQ youth and prospective parents in the foster care system, much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression of the children and foster parents; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the extraordinary role that LGBTQ parents play in the foster care system, as well as the unique challenges that face LGBTQ foster youth in California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the month of May 2018 as Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges that children, and particularly LGBTQ youth, face in the foster care system; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature reaffirms its support for LGBTQ foster youth and foster parents and pledges to strengthen its efforts to ensure permanent, safe, and loving homes that reduce instability and measurably improve outcomes for LGBTQ foster youth; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.