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ACR-193 Foster Care Awareness Month. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 193

CHAPTER 139

Relative to Foster Care Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 02, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 193, Bryan. Foster Care Awareness Month.

This measure would declare the month of May 2024 as Foster Care Awareness Month.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The needs of children and youth for belonging and unconditional emotional commitment are best met in families; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 45,000 children in California are navigating the complexities of the foster care system, longing for and deserving safe, enduring bonds with nurturing adults, a stable home, and comprehensive supports to grow, learn, and thrive; and

WHEREAS, California's children and youth represent our hope for the future and every child deserves a safe, loving, accepting, stable, and nurturing home; and

WHEREAS, Historically, foster youth have experienced alarming rates of homelessness as they transition out of care. While California has taken great strides to address this, 1 in 4 foster youth experience homelessness after exiting care and before turning 23 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Many California counties and community partners have successfully supported permanent family connections for foster youth, provided support for families at risk of entering the child welfare system, and changed practices to fully engage youth, families, and communities, thereby reducing the number of children in foster care; and

WHEREAS, California recognizes the enduring and valuable contribution of relatives and foster and adoptive parents who open their hearts, families, and homes to vulnerable children and youth; and

WHEREAS, California acknowledges the tireless efforts of countless individuals and organizations dedicated to meeting the needs of children and youth within, and transitioning out of, foster care, facilitating essential connections among youth and their siblings, and empowering young individuals to thrive as they transition into adulthood; and

WHEREAS, California is deeply committed to constructing a comprehensive, holistic behavioral health and strengths-based system for youth and families affected by the child welfare system, designed to be responsive to the trauma caused by family separation, specifically embracing nontraditional therapeutic methods such as enrichment activities and prioritizing lifelong relationships; and

WHEREAS, It is undeniable that children and adolescents thrive most effectively within the nurturing embrace of familial environments, thus ensuring that such placements continue to be given the highest priority; and

WHEREAS, California has undergone comprehensive reforms to improve the experience and outcomes of children and youth in foster care by improving assessments of children and families to make more informed and appropriate initial placement decisions, emphasizing home-based family care placements of children, appropriately supporting these placements with needed services, creating short-term programs for youth whose needs cannot be met safely in families, and increasing transparency and accountability for child outcomes; and

WHEREAS, California is dedicated to working in partnership with local governments, advocates, and stakeholders to address the disproportionate representation of Black, Latino, and indigenous youth in the foster care system, and further, to address systemwide outcomes that reflect that children of color in the foster care system are more likely to experience multiple placements and less likely to be reunited with their birth families than White children in the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, California is committed to working in partnership with the federal government, local governments, and community partners to improve the lives and futures of all children and youth touched by the child welfare system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares the month of May 2024 as Foster Care Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.