



# San Benito County Board of Supervisors

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District 5

April 25, 2017

The Honorable Blanca E. Rubio  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Human Services  
1020 N Street, Room 124  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Rubio,

RE: Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Families—SUPPORT

The County of San Benito has a position of SUPPORT on AB 1164 (Thurmond) to establish the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children, and the accompanying \$31 million budget proposal. This bill will help foster families and parenting foster youth by providing emergency, time-limited vouchers to help them pay for child care, bridging these families to long-term child care through the existing subsidized child care system administered by the California Department of Education.

When children are removed from their parents due to abuse and neglect, they are in crisis and need a safe, loving family environment. When our emergency response workers attempt to find homes for foster children, one of the top barriers for families in taking in a foster child is the cost of child care. Current foster care grants provide for the basic care and supervision needs of foster children but simply do not cover the costs of child care. Due to a "timing gap," these foster families cannot immediately access child care subsidies as these programs often operate at full capacity. It can take weeks or even months for the foster family to access these subsidies. This means that caregivers who work cannot take in a child without significantly disrupting their lives or putting their family in financial jeopardy.

San Benito County also has a shortage of foster homes in the community; many of our children are placed out of county, out of their community and familiar surroundings. San Benito County is currently working to increase the number of foster homes in our community; however, an identified need by prospective foster parents is assistance with child care. Although subsidized child care slots are

available through the local GO-Kids program, there are waiting lists for these popular slots. AB 1164 would be a benefit to foster families and increase the number of foster homes in our community.

The recruitment of foster families is essential for San Benito County's continued implementation of the state's Continuum of Care Reform. Readily available child care, coupled with training and coaching for child caregivers, will support our county's efforts to connect a child with a loving foster home immediately and ensure the foster child receives trauma-informed care from all their caregivers. The child care navigator component will ensure a streamlined connection for foster families to the subsidized child care system.

Child care and development services are a critical component to the success of California's Continuum of Care Reform effort to connect foster children to loving, high quality foster homes. For this reason, we urge your support for AB 1164 and the accompanying budget proposal.

Sincerely,

Jaime De La Cruz  
Chair, Board of Supervisors of San Benito County

cc: The Honorable Steven S. Choi, PhD, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Lorena S. Gonzalez Fletcher, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Brain Maienschein, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Mark Stone, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Tony Thurmond, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Philip Y. Ting, Chair, California State Assembly Budget Committee  
The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly  
County Welfare Directors Association of California