American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, CALIFORNIA

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March 10, 2017

The Honorable Dante Acosta
State Capitol, Suite #2002
Sacramento, CA 94249
Fax: (916) 319-2138

RE: AB 754 (Acosta): Foster Youth Enrichment Activities
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember Acosta:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 754 (Acosta). This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to convene a workgroup to develop an implementation plan for the California Foster Youth Enrichment Grant Program, which would be created in order to provide grants of $500 or less to foster children so that they may participate in activities which increase their skills, abilities, self-esteem, or overall well-being.

Foster youth are among the most vulnerable populations in California. Many have lived through multiple, often severe traumas, receive little or no family support, and must regularly integrate themselves into entirely new living environments while also managing their academic careers. This not only puts them at a considerable disadvantage relative to their peers, but also makes it very difficult for many foster children to maintain a lifestyle that feels “normal.” It is imperative that we give foster children multiple opportunities in which to develop socially, academically, and emotionally, in order that they may live fulfilling and healthy lives.

AB 754 (Acosta) would offer foster youth throughout California a chance to pursue opportunities that might otherwise be closed to them. Many valuable enrichment activities—from school trips or music lessons to summer camp or exam prep—often cost more money than foster youth can afford. By giving foster youth the resources to participate in activities that would otherwise be unaffordable, AB 754 (Acosta) would make a positive contribution to the well-being of thousands of children and youth throughout the state.

Pediatricians strongly support AB 754 (Acosta). We thank you for your public service and for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Susan Wu, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne