



March 24, 2017

The Honorable Tom Lackey
State Capitol, Suite #2174
Sacramento, CA 94249
Fax: (916) 319-2136

RE: AB 824 (Lackey): Transitional Housing for Homeless Youth
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Lackey:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support your proposed legislation AB 824 (Lackey). This bill would establish the Transitional Housing for Homeless Youth Grant Program to provide transitional housing and education services to homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24, including housing, access to education and employment assistance, independent living skill development, and family engagement and interventions.

California has by far the largest number of unaccompanied homeless youth of any state in the country, representing nearly a third of national totals. These children and young adults face great obstacles in building a happy and satisfying life. Homelessness makes it far more difficult to achieve an education, maintain steady work, and integrate into a community. Moreover, homelessness has numerous, well-documented negative effects on health and well-being in both the short and long term: not only is homelessness dangerous to physical safety and integrity, but it also increases risk of illness and is highly detrimental to mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, many youth find themselves homeless after experiencing severe traumas that are much harder to recover from in the absence of a stable living environment. Research has demonstrated that poor family relationship quality, victimization during adolescence, and histories of foster care placement or school expulsion are all independent predictors of homelessness; LGBTQ and racial/ethnic minority youth are also disproportionately affected. It is essential that we assist these youth in building a better future for themselves.

AB 824 (Lackey) would lend a lifeline to homeless California youth by providing \$15 million for crucial intervention services that would help them get back on their feet. This would stand to drastically improve the lives of thousands of young people across California who are very much in need of our support.

Pediatricians across the state support AB 824 (Lackey). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "nancygraff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "nancy" written in lowercase and "graff" in a more stylized, uppercase-like form.

Nancy Graff, 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