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March 1, 2017

The Honorable Jim Beall  
State Capitol, Room 2082  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 651-4915

RE: SB 12 (Beall): Foster youth: postsecondary education: financial aid assistance  
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Beall:

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 SB 12 (Beall). SB 12 (Beall) would require the development of an automated system to aid foster children in verifying their status for Pell Grant applications, and would also double the number of community college districts receiving funds to expand postsecondary education for foster youth, from 10 to 20. It would also require that case plans for foster youth of 16 or older specify the person who is to assist the child with applying for college financial aid.

Foster children are among the most vulnerable populations in our state: many are survivors of multiple traumas and have had little or no family support from a young age. It is no surprise, then, that making the leap to college is a tough ask for most foster kids. According to the National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care, 84% of 17- and 18-year-old foster children state a desire to go to college—yet only 50% even graduate from high school. Moreover, only 20% attend college and fewer than 10% attain a bachelor's degree. There are many reasons for this, but chief among them is an inability to afford a college degree. We hear from our pediatrician members that their foster youth patients often tell them they would like to go to college, but they simply don't have the money. Yet a college education promises foster kids an average of \$481,000 in additional lifetime earnings—a potential ticket out of poverty, if only they could afford it.

SB 12 (Beall) would help foster youth achieve their dreams by making it easier for them to access the financial aid resources essential to a college education—and, in turn, a life not limited by their difficult beginnings.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 12 (Beall). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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