



February 24, 2017

The Honorable Connie Leyva
State Capitol, Room 4061
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4920

RE: SB 245 (Leyva): Foster Youth: Sexual Education
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Leyva:

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 245 (Leyva). This bill would require that case plans for youth in foster care 10 years of age and older include documentation that the youth has received comprehensive sexual health education. The case plan would be updated annually to identify how the agency will ensure the youth has access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information on puberty, reproductive, and sexual health care, and how the agency will ensure the youth is not facing any barriers in accessing reproductive and sexual health care services or treatment.

All adolescents should have access to critical information about their bodies and their sexuality. As American Academy of Pediatrics policy states, “The AAP strongly advocates for the prevention of unintended adolescent pregnancy by supporting comprehensive health and sexuality education, abstinence, and the use of effective contraception by sexually active youths.” However, many children are not afforded these resources—including many foster children, who lack stable home environments and often move around from school to school, causing them to miss any sexual education that may be offered. This not only makes more difficult the detection and reporting of sexual abuse, to which foster youth are especially vulnerable, but also contributes to higher pregnancy rates, making it harder for foster youth to escape poverty and family instability once they themselves become adults. One study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy suggests that girls in foster care have teen pregnancy rates of about 2.5 times that of their peers not in foster care.

SB 245 (Leyva) would help to break this cycle and afford thousands of foster youth across California the information and health services they need to live healthy, happy lives. Pediatricians across the state support SB 245 (Leyva). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Adam Brubaker, MD

Adam Braddock, 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