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March 27, 2020

Assemblymember Philip Ting
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0019

Re: AB 2880 (Ting) Preventing Homelessness among Foster Youth in California
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Ting,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports AB 2880 as introduced February 21, 2020, which would prevent California's foster care system from contributing to the growing homelessness crisis by establishing a Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD) Housing Supplement.

In California, the cost of housing increased 64 percent since 2012, while the monthly THP-NMD rate has increased just 24 percent. The failure of the THP-NMD rate to keep pace with the cost of housing has contributed to increased homelessness, exclusion of young parents and youth with disabilities from placement, fewer supportive services and geographic displacement for these vulnerable youth.

AB 2880 would establish a supplement amount for both parenting youth and youth who are not parents, based on each county's Fair Market Rent (FMR), a system set and used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Thus, supplement amounts would adjust annually, responsive to changes in the housing market. The approach of the THP-NMD Housing Supplement was strongly vetted and selected unanimously by a workgroup of stakeholders convened by the California Department of Social Services as required by previous legislation, SB 612 (2017, Mitchell).

Foster youth, including those in the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents program (THP-NMD) face significant challenges. Moira Szilagyi, MD, PhD, FAAP, in presenting what pediatricians should know regarding children in foster care states that, "Removal from family and all that is familiar is emotionally traumatizing for almost all children and teens. It's not just removal from parents, but removal from the community, neighborhood, school, child care center, and sometimes the child's siblings...The major health needs of children in foster care are in the arena of mental and developmental health, rooted in the child's prior history of trauma and deprivation...Many transitions occur in foster care and can negatively impact a child's well-being, making them feel transient or "disposable"." Foster youth deserve our support in building on their strengths to overcome those challenges.

AB 2880 would help to prevent the extreme stress and trauma of homelessness from making progress for foster youth much harder by supplementing the THP-NMD. Pediatricians across the state strongly support AB 2880. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Graff".

Nancy Graff, MD
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: Kris Calvin, CEO, American Academy of Pediatrics, California, American Academy of Pediatrics, California leadership

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California is the state-level advocacy organization of the four AAP California Chapters. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of all children and youth in California and to support the professional needs of our California Chapter member pediatricians. We are a 501(c)4 nonprofit legally incorporated in California.