



American Academy of Pediatrics, California
5000 Campus Drive Newport Beach, CA 92660

Phone (626) 796-1632 | **Fax**
(626) 628-3382

Email: support@aap-ca.org | www.AAP-CA.org

February 25, 2021

The Honorable Connie Leyva
State Capitol Room 4061
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 228 (Leyva) Supporting Foster Youth in Community College
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Leyva,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports SB 228, as introduced on January 15, 2021, which would allow greater access to higher education for current and former foster youth.

In 2014, the California State Legislature passed SB 1023 (Liu), which established a special program for foster youth enrolled in community college, known as NextUp. This program is in place at 45 community colleges, serving 2,100 current and former foster youth annually. NextUp provides a comprehensive array of services to promote college retention and degree attainment. Students must have been in foster care after the age of 16, be under age 26, and be enrolled in a minimum of nine units to participate. While the NextUp program has been very effective, several barriers to access have been identified that create challenges for foster youth attempting to pursue a postsecondary credential.

SB 228 will make common sense changes to address these barriers, including modifying eligibility so that students who were in foster care after age 13 may participate, creating flexibility around income requirements for students transitioning from full-time employment to school, specifying that existing funds can be used to provide support to enrolled students as they are matriculating, and clarifying that programs should create streamlined systems for application and entry. This bill also expands eligibility for priority enrollment at UC, CSU, and CCCs to conform to the related question for financial aid, as well as the NextUp program.

AAP-CA strongly supports SB 228. 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 "Melissa Ruiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Melissa Ruiz, M.D. FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership