

AB 525

Housing Affordability for Foster Youth in SILPs



SUMMARY

California is facing an affordability crisis, disproportionately impacting low-income Californians looking to secure housing. This is especially true for foster youth in extended foster care who participate in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP). Though foster youth in SILPs receive a monthly aid meant to cover living costs, the cost of housing has increased substantially since the SILP was established, and the basic rate provided to youth in these placements has not kept pace, leaving them vulnerable to housing instability. To reduce homelessness and help foster youth compete with the increasing cost of housing, AB 525 would establish a SILP housing supplemental payment to augment the basic rate, based on the cost of housing in their county of residence.

BACKGROUND

When California extended foster care in 2010, it created the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), designed for youth ages 18-21. Unlike other foster care placements, youth in SILPs are responsible for identifying and securing their own housing, which can include apartments rented alone or with roommates. As of July 1, 2022, the SILP was the single-most utilized placement in California, with a total of 3,361 (41%) non-minor dependents.

Regardless of which county they reside in, everyone in SILPs receives a monthly rate of \$1,129, meant to cover living costs like rent, food, and supplies. However, since the program's establishment, the basic rate has only increased by 41 percent, while over that same period, the cost of housing has increased by up to 113 percent in high-cost counties. For many youth, this inadequate monthly payment has left them unable to compete with other low-income Californians looking to secure housing and has impeded their ability to cover costs outside of rent. According to the

CalYOUTH Study's 2015 data, 40 percent of youth residing in SILPs reported their monthly budget was insufficient to cover rent and expenses such as utilities, transportation, and food. Without adequate funding, the end result for many youth is a cycle of homelessness and falling deeper into poverty.

In 2020, California recognized the need to augment the monthly rate paid to foster youth in extended foster care by approving the establishment of a housing supplement for youth in Transitional Housing Placements for Non-Minor Dependents (AB 79, 2020). AB 525 would build on that work and extend that benefit for youth in SILPs.

THIS BILL

To reduce placement instability and homelessness for youth in extended foster care, AB 525 would establish a SILP Housing Supplement, modeled after the Housing Supplement established in 2020 for the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents.

The housing supplement would augment the Basic Rate paid for SILPs based on Fair Market Rent, which is the system developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine the allowable rent level for individuals who participate in their Housing Choice Voucher program. The housing supplement would be calculated annually and would vary based on the cost of housing in each county.

SUPPORT

John Burton Advocates for Youth (Sponsor)

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