



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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****PRESS RELEASE****

LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOSTER YOUTH EDUCATED AND EMPOWERED WITH NEW BILL OF RIGHTS WEBSITE, HANDBOOKS, COLORING BOOKS, AND MORE

Collaboration of the Los Angeles County Commission for Children & Families,
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the
California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson and Many Stakeholders
Across California

Foster Youth Host Virtual Event to Help Educate About Rights

Los Angeles – November 12, 2020 – Los Angeles County launched the LAYouthRights.com website, a new resource to help foster youth understand their rights. The teen-friendly site highlights the more than 40 laws that make up the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and features a downloadable Foster Youth Bill of Rights Handbook, Coloring Book, and other printed materials that will also be distributed to youth and caregivers in the coming weeks. Current and former foster youth are hosting a [virtual Zoom event](#) today at 5:00 PM to help educate foster youth throughout the State about their rights.

The new foster youth materials were created by a collaboration of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles County Commission for Children & Families, Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson, current and former foster youth, and many other stakeholders across California.

“With so many challenges facing our foster youth, we need them to know first and foremost that their community is here to protect them and to help them. Empowering them with rights is a good step forward, but we also need to continue to show that their community is



here for them if their rights are being violated,” said Los Angeles County 4th District Supervisor Janice Hahn.

“The new laws are important to our LGBTQ+ youth in particular because it offers a lot of new protections. From the right to be referred to by your preferred name and pronouns, to the right to privacy about their sexual orientation and gender identity & expression to name only a couple of the new rights to protect LGBTQ+ youth,” said Los Angeles County 3rd District Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

“At any given time, there are more than 38,000 youth in foster care in Los Angeles County,” said Bobby D. Cagle, director for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. “Youth in care should feel safe and secure where they live, and they also need to know they have a place to turn to if they need help or resources. LAYouthRights.com is a critical resource where youth may have their questions answered.”

“I was proud to co-sponsor the Foster Youth Bill of Rights legislation because we need our foster youth in California to know that we have their backs. We’re here for them and by extending these rights and creating these new materials, we want them to know that their safety and well-being is our community’s top priority,” said Assemblymember Mike Gipson (D-Carson), who sponsored AB 175.

“Foster youth were essential partners in the creation of these documents, which will educate foster youth and those who care about them. Their lived experience helped to bring these rights to life,” said Dr. Wendy Smith, former Chair of the L.A. County Commission for Children and Families.

Late last year, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law AB 175, expanding the existing Foster Youth Bill of Rights legislation. The expanded law now requires children in foster care and their representatives to be informed of their rights in an age-appropriate manner. In addition, there are expanded rights to protect and better serve LGBTQ+ youth; the right for foster youth to review their own case plan starting at the age of 10; the right to have reasonable access to a computer and the internet, among other new rights.

“Our goal is for every young person in care, as well as those who love and work in service to them, to be educated about foster youth rights – whether it’s through the LAYouthRights.com website, our new handbook, or the coloring book,” said Dr. Tamara N. Hunter, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Commission for Children & Families. “There’s been increased focus on racial justice and equity in recent months, and this must extend to youth in foster care, as they are among our most vulnerable and marginalized populations. We must empower them by educating them about their rights, and then



collectively-as a community- ensure that these rights are upheld. These materials bring us so much closer to this goal.”

“Being in foster care can be overwhelming for youth, especially if they are not sure where to turn to for help if they feel their caregivers are not being held accountable. With these new materials, our hope is to educate youth so they know that there are people they can call 24/7 to get help,” said Rochelle Trochtenberg, the California Foster Care Ombudsperson. The Foster Care Ombudsperson’s Office is empowered to receive and investigate complaints made by or on behalf of youth in foster care. Foster youth in need of support, can call 877-846-1602.

“The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is excited about the release of the new website and materials related to the updated Foster Youth Bill of Rights, which will help empower and guide California youth in foster care, providing key information and resources in a centralized location,” said CDSS Director Kim Johnson. “We will continue to work closely with our county partners and additional stakeholders to ensure that the rights of California foster youth are understood, supported, and protected. It is my hope that this important work will help California youth in foster care make informed decisions about their futures.”

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The Department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle - a former foster child and longtime social worker. For more information, visit <http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.