



April 19, 2021

The Honorable Lisa Calderon
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 2137
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 640 (Cooley) – Eligibility Redeterminations for Extended Foster Care (EFC)As Amended
April 12, 2021 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Calderon:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC) and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we are writing to support Assembly Member Cooley's AB 640, related to eligibility redeterminations for Extended Foster Care (EFC).

The federal Fostering Connections to Success Act of 2008 gave the states the option of extending foster care to age 21. California adopted this option through the passage of AB 12 (Beall and Bass, Statutes of 2010). California's EFC Program began implementation on January 1, 2012 and allowed foster youth aged 18 to remain in care, without a new foster care eligibility determination, so long as that youth agreed to meet specified participation requirements. Since 2010, the EFC program has grown into a successful program serving young adults in foster care ages 18-21.

Unfortunately, the EFC Program has not been fully funded by the state as intended by the Legislature when the program was established. Counties have borne significant and unexpected costs since the program began nearly a decade ago. AB 640 would provide some fiscal relief to counties by allowing counties to establish Title IV-E eligibility for many of these youth as they enter EFC, without any disruption in services or supports to these youth. It is estimated that net new federal funding could be approximately \$28 million to counties.

When AB 12 was implemented, the state had assumed that only 60% of eligible foster youth would opt into the program, but the opt-in rate has actually been more than 90%. The state also assumed that county-funded KinGAP cases eligible to convert to FedGAP for a 50% match was assumed to be as high as 90%, but only 45% of cases have become eligible. This led to a considerable funding gap, which counties continue to shoulder. AB 640 would help mitigate some, though not nearly all, of those unanticipated costs.

States are permitted to re-determine eligibility for Title IV-E at the time a foster youth enters the EFC Program, pursuant to federal policy. Under this process, it is more likely that an NMD will meet the Title IV-E eligibility because only the NMD's income and resources are considered for eligibility. California's program is not currently designed to take advantage of this policy, however. AB 640 would correct that oversight and enable counties to determine eligibility at the time a youth enters EFC, without any disruption to their services or support funding.

Page Two
April 19, 2021
AB 640 (Cooley) – UCC, RCRC – SUPPORT

Ultimately, this proposal is intended to give counties some measure of relief from the significant EFC costs they are incurring, which can free up funds for further reinvestment in the Child Welfare Services system.

For these reasons, UCC and RCRC support AB 640 and urge your 'Aye' vote on this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us for additional information at kbl@hbeadvocacy.com or sdukett@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
UCC



Sarah Dukett
Legislative Advocate
RCRC

cc: Assembly Member Ken Cooley
Members and Consultants, Assembly Human Services Committee

Additionally, costs have been greater over time than originally anticipated.