

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 531 (Friedman)

As Amended May 16, 2019

Majority vote

**SUMMARY:**

Addresses the affordable housing needs of youth in the foster care system by: allowing certain approved caregivers to convert to a host family without additional certification, requiring counties to examine a county's ability to meet the emergency housing needs of nonminor dependents (NMDs), and allowing a county welfare agency to, upon appropriation in the annual Budget Act, request funds for the purpose of providing housing navigation services to youth, among other things.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Allows a host family operating as a transitional housing unit to be certified by a transitional housing provider (THP), or consist of certain licensed or approved caregivers, as specified.
- 2) Specifies that a resource family, licensed foster family home, certified foster home, approved relative caregiver, or nonrelative extended family member (NREFM) operating pursuant to current law and provisions of this bill as a host family does not require additional certification by a THP, as specified.
- 3) Allows a county to certify that a supervised independent living placement (SILP) meets health and safety standards once every 12 months if certain criteria are met, as specified.
- 4) Requires a transitional housing provider to disburse payments between the transitional housing placement provider, the host family, and the NMD, as specified.
- 5) Requires counties to evaluate and examine the needs of NMDs, as well as the county's ability to meet the emergency housing needs of NMDs, as specified.
- 6) Requires a youth's spot in a placement to be held and funded for up to 14 days in a calendar month, subject to certain processes, and if certain criteria are met, as specified.
- 7) Allows a resource parent, approved relative caregiver, NREFM, foster family home, or certified family home to be converted to a host family without additional certification in order to support an NMD, as specified.
- 8) Allows, subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act, a child welfare agency to request housing navigation funding, subjects housing navigation services and navigators to certain requirements, and, further, requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to track the provision of housing navigation services, and document reported outcomes, as specified.
- 9) Allows a child welfare agency to, as specified, provide additional housing-related assistance to foster youth and NMDs, as specified.

**COMMENTS:**

*Extended foster care:* AB 12 (Beall), Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010, extended foster care benefits for eligible youth (referred to as NMDs) aging out of the child welfare system. AB 12 provided services and supports to transition-age youth until they reach 21 years of age and afforded these youth the opportunity to experience independent living in supervised living environments, as well as the ability to obtain educational and employment training to better prepare them to transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency.

*Housing needs of youth:* To provide for the housing needs of current and former foster youth, California provides several housing programs. The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) provides safe living environments to foster youth who are at least 16-years old, but not more than 18-years old, while Transitional Housing Placement Program + Foster Care (THP+FC) provides NMDs with certain placement options based on a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). For former foster youth who are between the ages of 18 and 24, California offers THP-Plus, which provides youth with up to 24 months of supportive housing and a wide range of supportive services.

*Need for this bill:* The provisions of this bill seek to simplify the process by which certain caregivers can provide housing to nonminor dependents, requires counties to examine placement resources, requires counties to make payments for NMDs who are absent from a transitional housing placement for up to 14 days, and allows counties to request funding to provide housing navigators as a resource to NMDs.

**According to the Author:**

"Research has shown that the EFC [extended foster care] Program has numerous benefits for participants....and has also shown that...many youth are still experiencing homelessness....without sufficient supported housing, the vision of EFC is falling flat. [This bill]...establishes housing navigators at the county level...and requires counties to assess their ability to meet the housing needs of individuals, reduce barriers, and streamline the certification process for host families."

**Arguments in Support:**

Supporters state that this bill will ensure that all eligible youth can take full advantage of the services and supports offered by extended foster care when transitioning to adulthood.

**Arguments in Opposition:**

None on file

**FISCAL COMMENTS:**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill may result in the following costs: 1) unknown, ongoing costs, likely in the low millions of dollars (General Fund [GF]) annually to support existing foster homes transitioning to become host families for youth in extended foster care; 2) ongoing costs of approximately \$15 million (\$10 million GF) annually to counties for housing navigation services, subject to an appropriation in the annual budget act; 3) ongoing costs of approximately \$2 million (GF) annually to counties for housing-related financial assistance to certain youth, subject to an appropriation in the annual budget act; and, 4) unknown costs to counties to evaluate their ability to meet the emergency housing needs of youth in extended foster care (this proposal is also being pursued in the legislative budget process).

**VOTES:**

**ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 8-0-0**

**YES:** Reyes, Mathis, Luz Rivas, Choi, Friedman, Gipson, Maienschein, Mark Stone

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 18-0-0**

**YES:** Gonzalez, Bigelow, Bloom, Bonta, Brough, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Diep, Eggman, Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Maienschein, Obernolte, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Robert Rivas

**UPDATED:**

VERSION: May 16, 2019

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