

**AB 1258 FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS**  
**ASSEMBLY MEMBER JUAN ARAMBULA**

**Summary**

AB 1258 expands eligibility for countywide education-based foster youth services to include all foster youth.

Current law (EC §42921) limits eligibility to foster youth in licensed facilities, such as group homes, and those in county-operated juvenile detention facilities.

**Background**

In 1981, the Legislature approved and funded four programs to serve foster youth through education-based programs. After the success of these programs, the Legislature expanded the core group of programs to six school districts and established uniform data collection. These core programs serve all foster youth in their jurisdictions.

In 1998, the Legislature approved and provided funding for county-wide programs that focused on foster youth in licensed group homes. The eligibility for the county-wide programs was expanded to include youth in juvenile detention facilities in 2006.

These programs seek to address some of the many challenges faced by foster youth, particularly those issues related to frequent change of placement. These issues include loss of education records, loss of health records, difficulties adjusting to changing care and school environments, loss of contact with persons familiar with them, and a lack of permanent family or family-like support systems upon emancipation from the foster care system.

Regarding the programs' priorities, existing law states, "It is the intent of the Legislature that children with the greatest need for services be identified as the first priority for foster youth services."

Currently, there are 57 county-wide foster youth services programs and 28 juvenile detention programs, in addition to the 6 core programs. According to the California Department of Education's 2008 report to the Governor and Legislature, the current programs serve

approximately 55% of the foster youth in the state.

The report also states that the "evidence shows that the FYS Core District and Countywide Programs have continued to provide essential academic and support services that significantly enhance the ability of foster youths to achieve academic standards and access resources, support services, and enrichment activities; and the new JD Programs show much promise providing comprehensive transition services for foster youths from Juvenile Hall back to local school districts."

CDE's 2008 report notes strong recommendations from local programs to expand services to all foster youth. In its final recommendations to the Judicial Council, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care recommends that FYS programs be expanded to include all foster youth.

**Purpose**

As is documented in numerous studies, foster youth face tremendous challenges and experience disproportionate levels of poverty, abuse, homelessness, and incarceration as a result.

The foster youth services programs funded through CDE have demonstrated positive results but the current law ensures that nearly half of the state's foster youth cannot participate.

This bill would allow county-wide programs to serve those foster youth with the "greatest need", as the law requires, whether the youth are placed in group homes or with relatives.

**Supporters**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file