[PLACE ON LETTERHEAD]

[INSERT date]

The Honorable Mark Stone, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Sent via FAX: 916-319-2189*

**SUPPORT FOR AB 2583 (DABABNEH): FOSTER YOUTH CAREGIVER EVALUATIONS**

Dear Assemblymember Stone:

I am writing in strong **SUPPORT** of **AB 2583 (Dababneh)**, which would give foster youth the opportunity to provide feedback about the quality of care they are receiving in their homes and from their caregivers.

[INSERT paragraph about your organization]

Currently, there are more than 60,000 foster children in California. Foster children have been abused and neglected which has resulted in them being removed from their homes and families. As they struggle to face this additional trauma and uncertainty, they are placed into a system that fails to support them adequately. The state has taken responsibility for them and must ensure they are being cared for properly and appropriately.

Despite this responsibility and the flaws in the system, a statewide process does not currently exist for collecting foster youth input and using it to develop innovative methods for improving system outcomes. **AB 2583** seeks to address this absence by directing the California Department of Social Services to create such a process.

When a child enters foster care, they are often simply placed in a home or facility where a caseworker was able to find an open bed, rather than in a place that has been determined to best meet that child’s unique needs. One reason for this is that we do not have a tool that tracks and evaluates foster homes and facilities based on their strengths and weaknesses in order to make appropriate decisions on where to place children.

Children in foster care, just like all children, need caring and engaged adults to support their well-being. Currently, licensing agencies lack a satisfactory process to compile, track, and evaluate feedback from foster youth on the care they are receiving from caregivers in foster homes and group homes. While the youth may share information verbally with a social worker, there is no official method for collecting that feedback.

**AB 2583** aims to harness that valuable input in order to better match children with the appropriate caregivers, identify areas of strength or weakness in the system, improve the overall quality of care, and provide an avenue for foster youth to voice their opinions about improving the system that is ultimately meant to serve them.

For these reasons, we strongly **SUPPORT** **AB 2583 (Dababneh)** and ask that you vote **“AYE”** when it comes before the Assembly Human Services Committee.

We thank you for your commitment to the vulnerable young people in our foster care system who the state has taken responsibility for supporting and caring for.

Sincerely,

[INSERT full name]
[INSERT title]

[INSERT organization name]

cc: The Honorable Matthew Dababneh

 Chris Reefe, Assembly Human Services Committee

 Mary Bellamy, Assembly Republican Caucus

 Lark Park, Office of the Governor