[Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable Mark Stone, Chairman

Committee on Human Services

California State Assembly

State Capitol, Room 5155

Sacramento, CA 94249

*Sent Via Fax: 916-319-2189* **Re: Support for AB 2668**

Dear Assemblymember Stone,

On behalf of [organization’s name], I am writing in support for Assembly Bill 2668, which would provide valuable support for parenting dependents in California’s foster care system.

[insert organization’s background and/or any specific stories or cases to emphasize the need for this bill]

Young parents in the foster care system face both the challenges of being in foster care as well as the challenges of being a young, usually single, parent. Studies of both groups have found that they will experience higher than average rates of poverty and unemployment and low educational attainment.

A 2013 California study revealed that the rates of abuse and neglect among children born to teens with a history of maltreatment are 2-3 times higher than the rates of children whose teen mothers had no child welfare involvement. This underscores the need to provide young parents in foster care with adequate support and services to overcome the challenges they face, and to preserve and strengthen their family unit. The issue of parenting youth in foster care has become more pressing with the implementation of extended foster care in California. The California study estimated that as many as one in three female youth may be parenting by the time they exit the foster care system on their 21st birthday.

Under current law, a “Shared Responsibility Plan” outlines the duties, rights, and responsibilities of a teen parent and his/her caregiver with regard to the teen parent’s child, and identifies supportive services to be offered to the teen parent. Upon the completion of the plan, the caregiver’s foster care payment is increased by $200 each month. SB 2668 would encourage a custodial non-minor dependent parent living in a SILP to enter into a “Parenting Support Plan” with an identified responsible adult, such as a mentor or relative. The plan would identify ways in which the responsible adult will assist the youth and his/her baby. Upon completion of the plan, the custodial non-minor dependent parent’s foster care payment would be increased by $200 each month.

Formalizing a relationship with a responsible adult (aunt, uncle, neighbor, former foster parent, etc.) will provide the young parent and child with guidance, support and a shoulder to lean on. Something has simple as occasional babysitting or picking the child up from day care can be the difference between child protective services involvement or not. It will also help the youth to develop a relationship which can outlive the non-minor dependent’s time in the foster care system, thereby providing a protective measure against future child welfare system involvement.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge your support for AB 2668.

Sincerely,

[Signature

Name

Address

Contact Information]

cc: Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva