



**ASSEMBLYMEMBER DAVE JONES**

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**FACT SHEET**  
**Assembly Bill 921 (Jones)**  
**FOSTER YOUTH AND DELINQUENCY COURT**

**Summary**

AB 921 would ensure that foster youth who are transferred from the dependency (foster care) courts to the juvenile delinquency court system, are not denied their rights to transitional living assistance services. When foster youth “age out” of the foster care system at the age of 18, a variety of assistance and counseling programs are made available to them. These programs provide assistance with housing, college planning and financing, and job and financial counseling. The most significant challenge facing “aged out” former foster youth is typically housing. By ensuring that all former foster youth receive access to these transitional living skills programs, the likelihood that they find jobs and housing increases, thereby reducing the growing population of homeless youth.

**Background**

Although California permits counties to operate under a “dual jurisdiction” system for young people who may, at different times, be placed in both dependency and ward of the court status, only 8 counties have adopted such a “dual jurisdiction” system. As a practical matter, foster youth who are removed to delinquency court status frequently do not return to their former dependency status. This is often because housing placement is unavailable, even when the youth has satisfied court-ordered detention or treatment.

While there is no specific provision of California law that terminates a dependency court foster youth’s eligibility for transitional living services, as a consequence of having been placed in the delinquency court system, in fact that is often what happens. These youth “fall between the cracks” because the foster care program identifies those youth who are about to “age out” at the age of 16 or 17, based on their residency status. Young people who are wards of the court – and may be housed in juvenile court detention or treatment facilities - but who may also be former foster youth – are not “counted” in these assessments. Although probation officers who oversee wards of the court are expected to advise and assist their wards with access to transitional living services, reports suggest this rarely occurs.

Additionally, when these children emancipate from juvenile delinquency court status, rather than from dependency court status, they are effectively denied access to other private and non-profit programs designed to assist former foster youth.

## **This Bill**

AB 921 would ensure that every dependent child, including those who become a ward of the court, receives Independent Living Program (ILP) services and all other state services entitled to emancipating former foster youth, regardless of their residency status while a ward of the court.

Further, the bill clarifies that when a former foster youth is discharged either from the dependency court or from the juvenile delinquency court, all such “former” foster youth are entitled to access to ILP and other available transitional living services.

AB 921 also requires that all emancipated foster youth, including those discharged from juvenile delinquency custody, be provided with written notice confirming and memorializing their status and eligibility as a “former foster child.”

## **Support**

Children’s Advocacy Institute  
California Coalition for Youth

## **Contacts**

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