



**LEGISLATION &
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**
1831 K Street
Sacramento, CA 95811-4114
Tel: (916) 504-5800
TTY: (800) 719-5798
Intake Line: (800) 776-5746
Fax: (916) 504-5807
www.disabilityrightsca.org

April 2, 2021

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 670 (Calderon) – Minor and Non-Minor Dependent Parents

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, write in strong support of AB 670 (Calderon) and to thank you for authoring this important legislation. Assembly Bill 670 will strengthen families and disrupt intergenerational involvement in the child welfare system by providing important protections to parenting foster youth.

Brief description of your organization and why it supports enhanced legal protections for parenting foster youth. If possible, insert a client story demonstrating the critical need for parenting foster youth to have access to legal counsel and other protections when faced with a child welfare investigation involving the foster youth's own children.

Parenting foster youth struggle to access the basic supports they need for themselves and their children to thrive, including stable and nurturing housing, tangible resources, childcare, and positive and supportive relationships with caring adults. Because of this, young parents who themselves are in foster care are at high risk of losing temporary, or even

permanent, custody of their children – resulting in multi-generational involvement with the child welfare system. In fact, rates of substantiated abuse and neglect among children born to teen mothers with a history of reported or substantiated maltreatment themselves were two to more than three times higher than the rates of children whose teen mothers who did not have a history with the child welfare system.

For more than a decade, California has sought to support these young parents and interrupt intergenerational cycles of child welfare involvement. In 2008, AB 2483 (Bass) was passed to prevent parenting foster youth from voluntarily placing their children in foster homes or agreeing to a program of supervision by the child welfare system without first consulting with their attorneys. AB 1371 (Stone) in 2017 expanded the provisions of AB 2483 to include a parent who is a non-minor dependent or ward of the juvenile court. And, in 2015, as part of the Continuum of Care Reform, California enacted AB 403 (Stone) and SB 794 (Committee on Human Services) which specified that before terminating reunification services for a parenting foster youth, courts must consider whether there were barriers to accessing the services. That same year, AB 260 (Lopez) added protections from unfair scrutiny by placing restrictions on how past information in a youth's case file could be used to determine fitness as a parent.

Despite the strides made, there are still gaps in current law that work against these young families. Assembly Bill 670 seeks to remedy this by reinforcing and broadening existing protections for parenting minor and non-minor dependent parents.

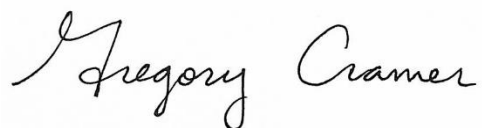
Specifically, AB 670 will:

- Requiring notice be sent to a parenting foster youth's attorney when a referral is made on their child;
- Ensuring the reunification services bypass provisions in Welfare & Institutions Code §361.5 do not apply to parents when reunification services and/or parental rights were terminated for a previous child when the parent was in foster care; and
- Ensuring that social workers and probation officers use a strength base approach to support a minor and non-minor dependent parent in providing a safe and permanent home for their child, and
- Clarifying that the county child welfare agency shall not conduct an

investigation on the child/children of a parenting foster youth if there has not been an allegation of abuse, risk or neglect.

AB 670 is needed to support parenting foster youth so they can be empowered to disrupt the harmful intergenerational cycles of child welfare involvement that entrap families. For all these reasons, we strongly urge your support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory Cramer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gregory Cramer
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Lisa Calderon, California State Assembly
Arnell Rusanganwa, Legislative Assistant, Office of Assemblymember
Calderon