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Betsy Butler

March 29, 2017

The Honorable Mark Stone
Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1371 – Juveniles: Wards or Dependent Nonminor Dependent Parents (Support)

Dear Assemblymember Stone:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center, we write in support of Assembly Bill 1371, which would provide important protections for parenting foster youth who are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

Parenting youth in the foster care system face a compounded challenge of not only being in foster care but of being a young parent, often without considerable resources or support. Recognizing these unique challenges, California implemented several laws over the past decade to protect and strengthen these family units for foster youth.

AB 2483, passed in 2008, prevents 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 an attorney. However, it does not cover situations where parenting foster youth voluntarily limit their custodial rights outside of a formal program of supervision. Because of this, youth foster parents are entering into custodial arrangements without understanding the full legal terms and their implications.

CWLC advocates for justice and equality for women and girls through impact litigation, policy advocacy and education training, and places special emphasis on the rights of youth and the importance of the family unit. Foster youth should have a full understanding of their custody decisions so that these choices are centered on the needs of the child, the parent and the family as a unit.

For all these reasons above the California Women's Law Center supports AB 1371.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director