PRINT ON LETTERHEAD & email to simone@jbaforyouth.org

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown

Governor, State of California

State Capitol, Suite 1173

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT SB 12 (BEALL) — FOSTER YOUTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dear Governor Brown,

(Your organization) is pleased to support Senate Bill 12 (Beall) as enrolled, which would increase the rate of college retention and completion among California’s foster youth and bring new federal funds to California by increasing access to the Pell Grant, a federal grant that provides full-time college students $5,920 annually.

Sentence about your organization and why it cares about improving college outcomes for foster youth.

**SB 12 is a smart investment for California. The total annual cost of SB 12 is under $60,000 and the bill will leverage $29.5 million annually in federal funding through the Pell Grant.**

Without the Pell Grant, foster youth struggle and ultimately fail to graduate from college: By age 26, just 4 percent of former foster youth have achieved a college degree as compared to 36 percent of the same-age population of young adults. A key reason for this is a lack of access to financial aid; a 2015 report found that just 50 percent of foster youth in California’s community colleges received the federal Pell Grant, even though almost all foster youth students qualify.

The lack of college attainment among foster youth has very real costs, both for the individual and for California. For foster youth, low-educational attainment means substantially lower incomes and a greater likelihood of being unemployed. For California, low-educational attainment results in a widening gap between employer needs and workforce skills as well as higher rates of public assistance utilization – 64% of foster youth report relying on public benefits by age 26.

SB 12 would make three common-sense fixes to ensure foster youth receive the Pell Grant. First, it would help current foster youth apply for financial aid, streamline the financial aid verification process for foster youth who apply through Free Application for Federal Student Aid and expand the Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Education Support (CAFYES) Program, from the current level of 10 community college districts to up to 20 districts, using existing, unspent funding.

Thank you for support of Senate Bill 1023 (Liu), which established CAFYES. Since then, the program has gone on to help our most vulnerable students. SB 12 will build on this success. (your organization) thanks you for your consideration and urges you to sign SB 12 into law.

Sincerely,

Name, title and signature