



**COUNTY OF  
SAN BERNARDINO**

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April 3, 2007

The Honorable Nell Soto  
61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 1453 (Soto)** – As Introduced February 23, 2007 - **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Soto:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 1453, which would allow county child welfare agencies and private non-profit group home providers, with the approval of the California Department of Social Services, to enter into voluntary agreements to test alternative design and funding models for residentially based services and programs based on each county's service needs for targeted populations with the goal of transforming the current system into a family-focused, child-centered, community based and outcome driven system of care.

As you know, under current state law the role of foster care group homes is not well defined and outcomes to be achieved for children placed in group homes are poorly articulated. State laws and regulations governing community care licensing and Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) funding for group homes have not been updated to keep pace with the evolving expectations of the child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems, particularly the new emphasis on finding and providing support for permanent family placements for all foster children before they emancipate to adulthood.

This legislation complements the County of San Bernardino's existing position to create more local control of group home density and quality of care. AB 1453 addresses how the group home industry should restructure itself to be more responsive to teach county's placing needs by improving quality of care and reducing negative impacts upon neighborhoods. Finally, AB 1453 would grant the California Department of Social Services the authority to waive certain regulations governing child welfare services, AFDC-Foster Care payments, or the operation of group home programs that would otherwise hamper county and private non-profit agency's ability to implement the agreement and to test an alternative model to improve service delivery. For these reasons, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors supports AB 1453.

Sincerely,

**PAUL BIANE**  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

*The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.*