



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

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March 5, 2009

The Honorable Anthony Adams
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 167 (Adams)** - As Introduced 1/28/09 – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblyman Adams:

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support AB 167. This legislation would require school districts with high school graduation standards that exceed those established by the State Board of Education to permit foster children who transition to the district during the 11th or 12th grade, and would not be able to graduate by their 19th birthday, to meet the State Board of Education graduation requirements, not the standards of their new district.

AB 167 would require a school district to notify a pupil in foster care who is granted an exception if any of the requirements that are waived will affect the pupil's ability to gain admissions to a postsecondary educational institution and provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.

While a good education is critical to every child's successful transition into adulthood, it is especially true for children who spend long periods of their childhood in foster care. Research indicates that 83 percent of foster children are held back by the third grade, 75 percent are working below grade level, and only 33 percent of foster children will graduate from high school.

California's foster children are all too often moved from placement to placement and from school to school. These constant transitions often result in education-related problems including: loss of school credits, academic problems, and delays in earning a high school diploma. Studies show that high school students who change schools even once are less than half as likely to graduate.

The state sets minimum high school graduation standards for the state's school districts. However, local school districts have flexibility with regards to additional classes students must complete to graduate from their specific high schools.

A foster child who is in high school who has taken the required classes in their previous school district may find that their new high school requires additional classes, over and beyond those they have already taken, to graduate. Completing these new classes would likely not present a problem to a freshman, who would have the time to take the required classes before they graduate.

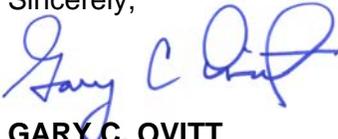
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These additional requirements could present a real problem to a foster child who is a junior or senior, and who may not have the time to complete these additional classes.

As a result, the foster child may not be able to meet graduation requirements. In time, AB 167 will strengthen the percentage of high school graduates among foster children. The academic success of an individual is a key determinant in preparation for the future. This bill is a step towards ensuring every young adult's ability to flourish.

For these reasons, the Board of Supervisors of San Bernardino County supports of AB 167. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County's Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation