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Governor Schwarzenegger and CDSS Director Highlight Enhanced Benefits for Foster Youth



October 6, 2010, Los Angeles, CA: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger joins California Department of Social Services Director John Wagner, Assemblymember Jim Beall (D-San Jose) and Assembly Speaker Emeritus Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) at Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services to highlight legislation improving the lives of children and youth in California's foster care system. The Governor ceremonially signed [AB 12](#), extending transitional foster care services to eligible youth between 18 and 21 years of age. Click [here](#) to read more.

John A. Wagner, Director California Department of Social Services October 6, 2010

I am extremely pleased to join Governor Schwarzenegger for this ceremonial signing of landmark legislation that extends benefits for California's transitioning foster youth population. Thank you, Governor Schwarzenegger for helping California achieve this remarkable accomplishment!

I also applaud Senator Burton, and Assembly Members Jim Beall and Karen Bass for their leadership as well as our state, federal, and philanthropic partners in making AB 12 a reality for our foster youth.

John A. Wagner
October 6, 2010

In California just over 4000 foster youth turn 18 each year without finding a permanent home, and many will now be able to take advantage of the first wave of extended services and benefits, beginning in 2012. These youth will have access to a better support system to further their education and gain employment while still having the security, supervision and support of foster care.

AB 12 provides youth with more time to prepare for self-sufficiency, thereby enabling them to successfully transition into adulthood.

In many ways this is made possible by the strong advocacy of Governor Schwarzenegger and many in this room who urged the federal government to provide funding for California's 10-year-old Kinship Guardianship Assistance, or KinGAP program. In KinGAP, California has long facilitated and funded efforts to place children in foster care with relatives. Changes at the federal level and AB 12 at the state level will now provide additional federal funding, that we can use to extend benefits to this important population.

Today, we celebrate this new law. Tomorrow, our work begins. The Department of Social Services will be working with many of you in implementing the provisions of AB12 and continuing our collaboration to improve the lives of California's children and foster youth.

Thank you for that partnership.