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KAREN BASS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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Dear Colleague,

I am writing today to express my continued support for H.R. 2069, the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act. I understand the concerns of many of my colleagues regarding conditions placed on this foster youth housing preference and, should you choose to do so, I completely respect your decision to withdraw your support for the bill.

In my opinion, foster youth should be treated the same as their parented peers, including having a safe place to live as they transition to adulthood. Most parents provide their children with a safety net should they fall on hard times, particularly in their young adulthood. Additionally, most parents would never finance their young adults housing without some conditions, such as going to work or school. Foster youth should not be treated any differently. H.R. 2069 does just that.

The original bill required that foster youth work or be enrolled in school 35 hours per week to continue to be housed. This minimum hourly work requirement has been removed. There are now a broader series of options for Public Housing Authorities that include foster youth participation in education, workforce training programs, or a Family Self-Sufficiency program. Additionally, the bill extends the grace period for youth receiving aid to 30 months, even if they fail to meet the requirements. Foster youth that are incapacitated, parenting children under the age of six, or participating in a substance abuse treatment programs are exempt from additional transitional support participation. Under this framework, foster youth can receive rental assistance to age 25.

I am also supporting this bill because it allows foster youth to get on public housing wait lists as early as age 16. This helps them get closer to the top of years-long waiting lists by the time they age out of foster care. The bill also gives foster youth the highest priority for housing voucher programs, rural rental assistance, and Section 8.

I agree that public housing should not be conditioned on work. The bill provides a safety net for youth who are unable to work, and flexibility for youth to focus on their priorities, whether it's parenting, substance abuse treatment, school, or work.

For these reasons, I will continue to support H.R. 2069, but, again, I fully respect the decision of any of my colleagues to withdraw their support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Bass".

Karen Bass (CA-37)
Member of Congress