



AB 349 – Increasing Infant Supplement to Support Parenting Foster Youth

Summary

AB 349 will require the infant supplement formula be adjusted by an equal amount to the California Necessities Index (CNI). This increase will begin in 2026 and will continue to be adjusted according to the CNI in all subsequent years.

Existing Law

This bill would amend Section 11465 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. Section 11465 establishes the Dependent Child-Foster Care Program, which includes a supplemental payment for parenting foster youth. The supplemental payment is provided to support the supervision and care of the child of the foster youth because the newborn is not considered a beneficiary of the state.

Issue

According to the California Childhood Welfare Indicator Project, there are approximately 40,000 foster children in California. An extremely vulnerable subset of this population is parenting foster youth. While a foster youth can be a dependent of the state until they are 21 years of age, their child is not born into that same system.

To compound the issue further, parenting foster youth are expected to pay for all of their baby's needs using the infant supplement. However, the supplement has not been increased since 2016. Furthermore, it is not adjusted to the California Necessities Index (CNI), which is a cost-of-living based adjustment. The lack of sorely needed increases to the supplement in addition to crushing inflation in recent years has left parenting foster youth with a lack of adequate support for their children.

Parenting foster youth are one of California's most vulnerable populations, and access to services and funding are a significant stressor. Without supporting parenting foster youth, we run the risk of creating a cycle of trauma that fundamentally changes their children's lives.

Solution

AB 349 provides a desperately needed adjustment to the infant supplement formula, requiring that it be indexed to the CNI. As one of only two foster care rates that are not automatically increased based on the CNI, this bill is necessary to bring parity to payments for our parenting foster youth.

In doing so, this measure remedies a long overdue funding shortfall and will provide financial security to both foster youth and their children.

Support

Mary's Path (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file

For More Information

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