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RIGHTS



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CALIFORNIA
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Education, Diversity, and Growth in the Economy

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california workforce association



CAYEN



Children
Now

CITY OF
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CHIRLA
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PIVOTAL

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Workforce
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will

THE UNITY COUNCIL

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Al Muratsuchi
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: ACR 16 (Mike Fong) Opportunity Youth in California - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi,

On behalf of a diverse coalition of advocates, we are writing to express our strong support of ACR 16 Opportunity Youth in California.

Opportunity Youth (OY) are individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 that are not in school or working, including youth and young adults involved with the foster care, juvenile justice, and homelessness systems of care. They face unique employment, education, and training barriers that often do not align with efforts that center adults. Opportunity Youth facing socio-economic and systemic barriers are oftentimes disconnected from education and workforce training opportunities, preventing young people of color from accessing our state's prosperity.

Data collected from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census shows that in California there were 572,756 youth ages 16-24 who were neither in school nor at work (12.5% disconnection rate). Data also indicated the disconnection rate of Black teens and young adults (ages 16-24) was more than twice that of their White peers (22.3% and 10.9%, respectively). Black and Latinx adolescents not only are disproportionately more likely to come from low-income households and have experienced past trauma but are also faced with discrimination that can derail their physical and mental well-being. Additionally, despite declines in youth incarceration, significant gaps remain as youth of color are overrepresented in our criminal justice system. Prioritizing OY will not only expand their education and workforce opportunities but also expand the pool of talent that employers can access to meet their workforce needs.

ACR 16 encourages the State of California to create pathways to success for OY and the need to develop a statewide comprehensive plan that will reduce persistent economic inequities, and prioritize: (1) investments in education and workforce training programs that create pathways to good jobs; (2) expand innovative "earn and learn" opportunities such as apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities; (3) advance dual enrollment implementation to allow OY to earn college credit while earning their high school equivalency; (4) ensure inclusivity of OY in the Cradle-to-Career Data System; (5) remove barriers to access student financial aid programs; and (6) protect social safety net investments that support basic needs such as food, housing, internet access, transportation, childcare, health, and mental health care – enabling OY to complete their education and training goals.

For these reasons, we strongly support ACR 16 and we look forward to our state leader's support for this important resolution.

If there are any questions, please contact Anna Alvarado at aalvarado@caedge.org.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children's Rights

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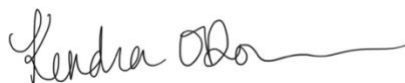
**Coalition for Responsible Community
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Mark Wilson
President & CEO



**EntreNous Youth Empowerment
Services**

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Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director



Envision Your Pathway

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Executive Director



Excite Credit Union

John Hogan
Vice President Community Relations



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Youth Will

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