



Date:

Dear _____,

As you well know, children are in foster care for no fault of their own. There are specific ways in which you can help provide for their well-being. Please consider these expressed needs made by our youth who have experienced foster care themselves. We need to hear and heed their voices. Please consider the following urgent needs:

1. **Increase foster parents' and foster youth stipend by 40%.** This will help address the crisis in shortages of foster homes and providers. It will also help provide access to affordable housing for older foster youth living on their own.
2. **Invest in on demand same day \$100 SNAP/Food assistance for children in foster care 0-20 during each placement change.** This alleviates hardship for foster parents and providers.
3. **Invest in a lifeline of \$200 monthly cash assistance from TANF fund for foster youth aging out 18-26 with no income.** 20% of youth become homeless on the first day out of foster care and 60% of trafficked victims report they were former foster children.
4. **Raise holiday allowance for children in foster care to \$200.** For 25 years, Holiday Allowance has remained \$25.
5. **Invest \$2 million for supportive housing** services for foster youth 18-24 through DHHS CSA to support youth aging out with housing navigators, stabilization, sustainability and expansion of HUD funded Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) housing voucher program, as 50% of the nation's homeless report they were former foster children.
6. **Invest \$5 million through Michigan Works programs** through MDHHS CSA, to close the achievement gap, and align with the 60 by 30 plan to remove barriers to access post-secondary education, for foster youth 14-26 year olds. Over 58% of youth are unprepared to age out of the foster care system. Review of Michigan's residential placements also showed that students were not receiving Career Technical Educational opportunities as required (Source: 2017-2023 Michigan State Plan for Every Student Succeeds Act by MDE).
7. **Reinstate MDHHS Educational Planners statewide** to support educational stability of K-12 and post-secondary students in foster care as required by ESSA and Fostering Connections Act. Ed Planners also facilitate the continuous collaboration of schools and local child welfare agencies for immediate enrollment, record transfer, transportation and intervention during suspension and expulsion hearings.
8. **Fostering Futures Scholarship for college students works. Invest additional \$500,000 to expand the scholarship program.** Currently every Michigan college student in Michigan who have been in foster care after age 13 receives \$1,000 for tuition, fees and books and \$500 for housing for fall and spring semester. 100% of funds go to students' scholarship. Expansion can increase award and allow funding for summer semester as most foster youth have to remain on campus throughout the year as they can not go home.

Sincerely,

Signature

Printed Name