

2014 -- S 2530

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH,  
AND FAMILIES EXAMINE AND REFINE ITS CURRENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES  
FOR TRANSITION PLANNING FOR 18-21 YEAR OLDS WHO HAVE EXITED THE CHILD  
WELFARE SYSTEM

Introduced By: Senators Ottiano, Miller, Nesselbush, and Cool Rumsey

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1           WHEREAS, Youth between the ages of 18-21 who exit directly from the child welfare  
2 system must quickly master a number of tasks related to adulthood, including those involving  
3 their housing, healthcare, and education. With fewer supports available to them, these young  
4 Rhode Islanders are vulnerable to being overlooked, which may increase the likelihood of poor  
5 educational attainment, financial uncertainty, homelessness, and mental health instability, at  
6 significant costs to society; and

7           WHEREAS, The General Assembly places authority for the well-being of children in the  
8 foster care system with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), which also  
9 assumes responsibility for addressing the transitional planning for youth who will exit the child  
10 welfare system; and

11           WHEREAS, The importance of extensive planning beginning in the early teenage years  
12 has been recognized by the United States Congress and is underscored in the Individuals with  
13 Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as in the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and  
14 the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. In addition, the  
15 Rhode Island Senate has signaled its interest in more robust transitional planning for youth aged  
16 18-21, most recently through its 2013 oversight of the Department of Children, Youth, and  
17 Families; and

18           WHEREAS, DCYF is recognized nationally as a leader in providing supportive services

1 to 16-21 year-olds through its Consolidated Youth Services Program (CYS), which includes  
2 YESS Aftercare Services for youth aged 18-21 who have aged out of foster care; and

3 WHEREAS, An analysis of available data gathered as part of the national Youth in  
4 Transition Database Survey will provide DCYF with valuable information on the successes and  
5 challenges of foster youth; and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island must ensure that the system in place continues to improve and  
7 enhance supports for our most vulnerable population of youth, and assure that these supports are  
8 as robust as they can be; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
10 hereby respectfully requests that DCYF examines best policies and practices in transition for  
11 youth aged 18-21 who leave the child welfare system; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby requests that DCYF identify whether and how  
13 Rhode Island's policies and practices can be refined in light of excellent youth transition models;  
14 and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that DCYF provides a written  
16 report to the Senate by January, 5, 2015, regarding how its policies and practices can be altered to  
17 create a more comprehensive transition system to assist 18-21 year olds towards achieving  
18 independence, as well as identifying any additional resources that might be necessary to support  
19 the changes; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
21 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Director of the Department of  
22 Children, Youth, and Families, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human  
23 Services, the Child Advocate, and the Chief Judge of the Rhode Island Family Court.

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