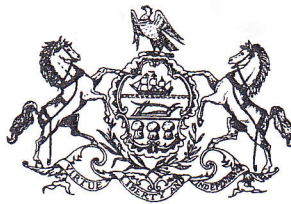


LOUISE WILLIAMS BISHOP, MEMBER

326 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202192
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2192
PHONE: (717) 783-2192
FAX: (717) 787-2960

1991 NORTH 63RD STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19151
PHONE: (215) 879-6625
FAX: (215) 879-8566



JAN 13 2011


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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2011
TO: ALL HOUSE MEMBERS
FROM: REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE WILLIAMS BISHOP 
SUBJECT: YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

I plan to introduce **three bills** amending the Juvenile Act to assist youth aging out of foster care who lack a permanent home and support system.

Statistics indicate there are about 1,100 youth in Pennsylvania in these circumstances. Without a positive transition to independence from foster care, these youth are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment, criminal arrests and poverty. Recent federal law (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008) is aimed at improving outcomes for these youth and providing states with federal funding for services.

The following 3 bills are based on HB 2297, which I sponsored last session and which received the unanimous support of the Children and Youth Committee.

- **The first bill** is similar to HB 2297. It requires each county children and youth agency to develop a transition plan at least 6 months prior to when a foster child turns 18. The plan will identify plans for housing, health insurance, education, mentors, and employment services. The bill also enables a child to request a court to extend foster care beyond age 18 and up to age 21 if the child meets certain criteria set by federal law. It also permits a child to request re-entry into foster care if the child continues to need support.
- **The second bill** is limited to requiring a transition plan for a foster child 6 months prior to when a foster child turns age 18.
- **The third bill** deals only with extending foster care after a child turns 18 and permits a child's re-entry into foster care if the child left foster care at age 18 and needs additional support.

If you would like to co-sponsor any of these bills, please contact Heather in my office at 772-9901(6487) as soon as possible.