

# Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 2013

TO: The Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Diann Jones, Chairperson  
Developmental Disabilities Council

RE: H.B. 163 [Transitional Foster Care Supports]

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) has reviewed H.B. 163 which requires the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families to create and maintain a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive program that fully integrates independent living services from ages 14 to 21 and which will assist youth with their successful transition into adulthood. DDC strongly endorses the proposed legislation and has the following observations.

As background, H.J.R. 18 from the 146<sup>th</sup> General Assembly resulted in an assessment of problems experienced by youth transitioning from foster care. The final 50-page report was issued in September, 2012 and is available at <http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/12527>. As the preamble to H.B. 163 recites, individuals transitioning from foster care at age 18 are at high risk. The following statistics are highlighted: 1) 82% of males are arrested by age 21; 2) 22% become homeless; and 3) females remaining in care to age 21 had a 38% reduction in the incidence of pregnancy before age 20.

H.B. No. 18 implements the recommendations in the report. Existing law (lines 46-50) already permits the Family Court to extend services to youth in DSCY&F custody to age 21. The legislation requires DSCY&F to "create and maintain a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive program that fully integrates independent living services from ages 14 to 21 that will assist youth with their successful transition into adulthood (lines 94-96, 160-163). The bill contemplates the provision of enhanced independent living services to promote financial stability, housing supports, medical supports, employment and training, education, and connection to resources.

DDC strongly endorses this proposed legislation given that there is a high prevalence of disability among youth in foster care. Indeed, the preamble (lines 14-15) recites that many youth aging out of the foster care system "reported lifetime prevalence of Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder similar to that of many U.S. war veterans".

Thank you for your consideration and please contact Developmental Disabilities Council at 302-739-3333 if you have any questions regarding our position or observations on the proposed legislation.

cc: The Honorable Jack Markell  
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.  
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

State Council for Persons with Disabilities

