



Children's Law Center of Los Angeles

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Miriam Krinsky
Executive Director
Children's Law Center
(323) 980-1712

New Bill Helps Children Caught Between Two Court Systems

LOS ANGELES — AB 129 Chapter 463, authored by Assemblywoman Cohn (D-Saratoga) and just signed into law, will enable dependency and delinquency courts in California to pilot new approaches to ensure that children caught between these two different courts receive the help and coordinated handling they need and deserve.

Previously, when a foster child went into the probation system, they didn't automatically transition back into foster care. "When a foster child goes into the juvenile court system and doesn't come back to the foster care system, studies show they are not as productive citizens as those who are raised in foster care. This is not in the best interest of the child, and that is not acceptable," stated Cohn.

In fact, many former dependent youth remain under the jurisdiction of the delinquency court longer than necessary. Unlike other children who complete their terms of probation and are sent home, these children were often "raised" under probation supervision, not because of any concerns associated with public safety, but because of the recognition that termination of probation jurisdiction would leave them without adequate care, housing and supervision.

Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center, applauded the new measure: "The former practice in California -- an approach at odds with nearly every other state in the country -- often had far-reaching negative implications for abused and neglected children. The child's history of abuse, mental and emotional problems and family difficulties remained, even when they moved from foster care to the delinquency system. Yet when children "crossed over" into delinquency, they were less likely to receive desperately needed services and attention that could benefit both the youth and society." The Children's Law Center, along with the California State Judicial Council, jointly cosponsored this legislative change.

####