



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

April 10, 2017

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 2187
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT SB 245 (LEYVA) — PROTECTING FOSTER YOUTH ACT

Dear Senator Jackson,

The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) is pleased to support Senate Bill 245 (Leyva), which would decrease the rate of unintended pregnancy among foster youth in California.

The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) is an organization that functions at the local, national, and international level to advance women in medicine and improve women's health. We achieve this by providing and developing leadership, advocacy, education, expertise and mentoring and through building strategic alliances

While the rate of unintended pregnancy among teens and young adults in the United States has reached a 30-year low, this reduction has not been experienced by youth in foster care. A full 52% of California foster youth have been pregnant at least once by age 19, a number almost 3 times higher than 19-year-olds not in foster care. More than two-thirds of these young women describe their pregnancies as unintended. By age 21, over 1 in 3 young women in foster care will give birth.

The high rate of unintended pregnancy and early child birth has serious long-term implications. For foster youth, early child-bearing significantly diminishes their likelihood of lifelong economic stability. The children of foster youth also suffer the consequences of unintended pregnancy: they are 300 percent more likely to have a substantiated report of abuse by age 5 than children born to same-age mothers who were not in foster care.

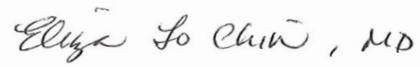
SB 245 would provide California's foster youth with the opportunity to achieve long-term economic security by decreasing the rate of unintended pregnancy by ensuring foster youth have access to comprehensive sexual health education, protecting the reproductive rights of foster youth, developing a statewide curriculum to prevent unplanned pregnancy and ensuring social workers, caregivers and judges and receive this training.

AMWA thanks you for your consideration and urges you to support SB 245.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eliza Lo Chin, MD", is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH
AMWA Executive Director
California Resident

American Medical Women's Association

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