

**Enrolled**  
**House Joint Memorial 12**

Sponsored by Representative ROBLAN; Representatives BARKER, BOONE, DEMBROW, FREDERICK, FREEMAN, GELSER, HARKER, KOMP, OLSON, TOMEI, WITT, Senators DEVLIN, JOHNSON, MONNES ANDERSON (Presession filed.)

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas many children and youth in the United States face serious challenges, including over 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect and nearly 800,000 children substantiated as abused and neglected each year; and

Whereas 296,000 children in the United States were removed from their homes as a result of child maltreatment investigations in 2008; and

Whereas more than 500,000 children and youth were in foster care in the United States at the end of the federal fiscal year of 2000 and nearly 800,000 children spend at least some time in foster care throughout the year; and

Whereas while 54,000 children are adopted from the public child welfare system each year in the United States, more than 133,000 children are waiting to be adopted; and

Whereas each year more than 20,000 youth in the United States leave the foster care system not because they have found a permanent family, but because they reached the age at which foster care assistance ended; and

Whereas there is an over-representation of certain populations, including Native Americans and African-Americans, within the child welfare system; and

Whereas 25 percent of children in out-of-home care in 2007 were living with relatives, yet the federal government only recently provided states the option to use Title IV funds for children raised by relative caregivers; and

Whereas 78 percent of children adopted from Oregon's Department of Human Services in 2009 were adopted by relatives or nonrelative foster parents; and

Whereas many children and youth that come to the attention of the child welfare system and a large proportion of those in foster care experience physical health issues and between 50 and 80 percent experience a moderate to severe mental health disorder; and

Whereas youth in foster care are more likely than their teen counterparts to become pregnant, with one study finding that nearly 50 percent of teen girls in foster care become pregnant by age 19; and

Whereas adolescent childbearing, in combination with other preexisting factors, is linked to negative consequences for mother and child and is also linked to significant costs to society; and

Whereas emancipated foster youth are also at high risk of experiencing homelessness, poverty, incarceration and mental health problems; and

Whereas there were 11,090 confirmed victims of abuse or neglect in Oregon in 2009 and 48 percent were younger than six years of age; and

Whereas 13,291 Oregon children spent at least one day in some kind of foster care in 2009; and

Whereas state courts are key decision makers in the lives of children involved in the child welfare system and should be supported because court decisions may include determination of abuse or neglect, whether a child should be reunified with the child's family or should be adopted or placed in another setting; and

Whereas the child welfare system will never fully address its primary mission unless the courts are an integral and functioning component of a statewide system of care and protection; and

Whereas the child welfare system includes a professional workforce in the courts, public and private child welfare agencies, mental health and health care programs, education settings, citizen review panels and volunteers such as the court appointed special advocates, all of which should be strengthened; and

Whereas the challenge of child abuse cannot be effectively addressed in a sustained manner until the nation addresses the outcomes for children in a comprehensive way; and

Whereas the White House Conference on Children and Youth had been the oldest White House conference, starting in 1909 and continuing approximately every 10 years until the last conference in 1970; and

Whereas these conferences focused attention on the critical needs of America's children and resulted in significant policies over the decades, including the creation of a Children's Bureau and standards of care for children; now, therefore,

**Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

That we, the members of the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the United States Congress to authorize and President Obama to call a White House Conference on Children and Youth; and be it further

Resolved, That we, the members of the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to make the White House Conference on Children and Youth a reality; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

---

Adopted by House March 16, 2011

---

Ramona Kenady Line, Chief Clerk of House

---

Bruce Hanna, Speaker of House

---

Arnie Roblan, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate May 19, 2011

---

Peter Courtney, President of Senate