

House Joint Memorial 12

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

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges resumption of White House Conference on Children and Youth.

JOINT MEMORIAL

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

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

6 Whereas many children and youth in the United States face serious challenges, including over
7 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect and nearly 800,000 children substantiated as abused and
8 neglected each year; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 Whereas youth in foster care are more likely than their teen counterparts to become pregnant,
30 with one study finding that nearly 50 percent of teen girls in foster care become pregnant by age
31 19; and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 Resolved, That we, the members of the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the
31 United States Congress to pass H.R. 618 and S. 938 to make the White House Conference on Chil-
32 dren and Youth a reality; and be it further

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

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