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September 2, 2016

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Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Governor  
State of California  
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2306 – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Brown,

The Youth Law Center (YLC), a public interest law firm working to protect children in the nation's foster care and juvenile justice systems from abuse and neglect, writes in support of AB 2306. This bill gives students transferring from juvenile court schools the same options to meet the state high school graduation requirements provided in existing law for foster youth and homeless youth and expresses the Legislature's intent that pupils in juvenile court schools have access to a course of study preparing them for high school graduation and career entry and fulfilling the requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University.

For many years, the Youth Law Center has advocated for educational rights of youth in court schools and upon reentry into the community. Our recently released report, Educational Injustice, <http://www.ylc.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/EDUCATIONAL%20INJUSTICE.pdf>, details the systemic problems and obstacles California youth face while attending court schools and upon reentry into the community. Court involved students typically come into the system from under-performing schools and test at levels that are years behind their age-equivalent peers. When they leave, students often have poor academic outcomes, low reenrollment and high drop-out rates. Many come from homes where English is not the primary language and many students qualify for special education services. Despite these obstacles, court involved students can and do achieve academic success. With the passage of AB 2306 and the removal of some of these obstacles, more court involved student could achieve academic success.

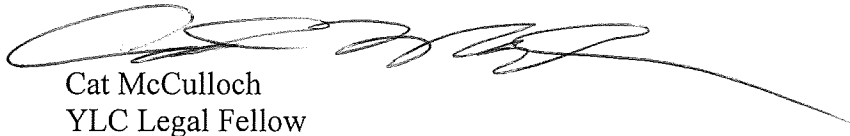
Court involved students, like foster youth and homeless students, often experience multiple school placements during their high school years and find it difficult to meet local graduation requirements after transferring into a school district in the middle of high school. For court involved students who have overcome many educational obstacles, AB 2306 would remove one last barrier these youth face in receiving high school diplomas. The current exemption from locally imposed graduation requirements extended to foster and homeless youth requires a school district to exempt a pupil who transfers into a district after completing two years of high school if the student cannot reasonably complete the local requirements by his or her senior year. (Education Code 51225.1) The student would still have to

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complete the statewide requirements to graduate from high school. The exemption has been afforded to foster youth and homeless youth, two populations that experience high rates of educational placement instability and poor educational outcomes. Students who exit the court school system should be afforded the same protections.

Court involved students who have achieved academic success and have met the state required graduation requirements should not be denied a diploma because they have not been able to complete locally required additional courses after transferring. For the above stated reasons the Youth Law Center requests your signature on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cat McCulloch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cat McCulloch  
YLC Legal Fellow

cc: Assembly Member Jim Frazier