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Assemblymember Cooper's Foster Youth Support Legislation Advances to Senate

SACRAMENTO, CA – Assembly Bill 150, authored by Assemblymember Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove), was approved today by the California State Assembly. The bill seeks to improve high school graduation rates and post-secondary education success for foster youth and other highly-mobile youth.

Over the past decade the Legislature has passed numerous bills to improve graduations rates among foster youth. While rates have improved, currently only 58 percent of highly-mobile youth graduate from high school compared to 84 percent of all other students statewide.

"Foster youth experience too many hurdles in life and graduating high school shouldn't be one of them," said Assemblymember Jim Cooper. "AB 150 will streamline transfers of educational credits to ensure highly-mobile youth aren't required to take courses they've already completed and can graduate without delay."

On average, highly-mobile youth transfer school districts eight times while in care, losing up to six months of their education with each move. Currently, when foster youth transfer to a new school district, existing law does not specify whether partial credits earned in a given subject area in one district are required to be combined with partial credits for similar coursework completed in another district. This ambiguity in law creates additional unnecessary hurdles for our most vulnerable youth, often leading to students duplicating coursework and delaying their ability to graduate on time.

"The Alliance for Children's Rights appreciates Assemblymember Cooper's leadership and support to improve high school graduation rates and post-secondary educational and vocational success for all highly mobile youth, including foster youth," said Kristin Power, Government Relations Director for the Alliance for Children's Rights. "We're thrilled the Assembly passed AB 150 to help prevent administrative barriers from impacting highly-mobile youth's progress toward graduation."

California high schools serve approximately 164,000 highly-mobile students, of which 17,000 are foster youth and 92,000 are homeless youth. AB 150 clarifies that all credits earned in a given subject area, including partial credits, shall be combined to maximize the credit for coursework completed in order to meet graduation requirements.

AB 150 will next be heard in the California State Senate.

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Assemblymember Cooper represents the Cities of Sacramento, Elk Grove, Galt, and Lodi.