



ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Kansen Chu 朱感生

DISTRICT 25

AB 1235

**YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
PREVENTION CENTERS**

Bill Version: 03/13/2019

SUMMARY

AB 1235 will improve service to runaway and homeless youth as well as youth at risk of becoming homeless or involved with the juvenile justice system by updating existing law to reflect the work done at runaway and homeless youth shelters. AB 1235 will rename the licensing category of the shelters to “youth homelessness prevention centers”, expand the definition of youth who can be served, increase the time a youth can be housed and access services from 21 to 90 days.

BACKGROUND

Runaway and homeless youth shelters are regulated by the California Community Care Facilities Act, and they provide a safety net for youth who are separated from their families and at-risk of entering the foster care or juvenile justice systems. These centers provide short-term, 24-hour nonmedical care, supervision, and services to youth who voluntarily choose to seek help at the centers. Services include housing, case management, family reunification services, counseling, and referrals to community services. If not for these shelters, runaway and homeless youth have limited and often unsafe alternatives, which increase their likelihood for exploitation, human trafficking, and entering the juvenile justice system.

Runaway and homeless youth shelters provide safety net housing to a variety of youth who cannot immediately return home. Schools, police departments, and social welfare staff refer to these safety net shelters when immediately returning a young person home is not appropriate the option. The role of the shelters is better described as preventing youth from becoming homeless by providing an array of services and reuniting with family. When family reunification is not an option, these programs find safe and stable alternate housing.

PROBLEM

Federal funding from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act allows youth to stay at the shelters for 21 nights, and that time limit carried over into California law. This is insufficient to meet the needs for many youth who need longer stays to reunite with families, locate relatives for safe, stable housing, or find safe alternatives. On any given night in California, shelters are discharging youth after 21 nights and then readmitting them after 24-hours as a new client to stay compliant with the regulations. The alternative is to refer to the foster care system rather than provide extra time needed to reunite youth with family or relatives. AB 1235 updates the Community Care Licensing category to better reflect the realities faced by youth and the work of runaway and homeless youth shelters.

SOLUTION

AB 1235 will rename shelters as “youth homelessness prevention centers” and expand the categories of youth served to include those at risk of homelessness. It will also increase the definition of “short-term” from 21 days to 90 days to reflect actual time necessary to ensure that the needs of these youth can be properly met.

SPONSOR

Bill Wilson Center

John Burton Advocates for Youth

STAFF CONTACT

Mike Stajura

(916) 319-2025

Michael.Stajura@asm.ca.gov