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Dear Distinguished Members of the Interim Finance Committee,

This year, on September 30th, over 360 children, many of whom are already the survivors of abuse or neglect, face another challenge that could leave them homeless or without future hope. Foster youth are among the most vulnerable populations in the United States and the pandemic's impact strained the foster support systems to the limit.

Nevada's foster youth have not seen a change in the monthly supplemental allotment in over a decade. With the surging cost of basic living essentials, those children face an economic strain that could place them at risk of homelessness. Many of Nevada's foster youth have voiced concerns over what losing this additional funding would do to them.

The Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act, enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2021, provided an additional \$200 a month supplement to deal with those rising costs. Imagine what a difference that makes to a teen struggling to get their first job, or foster parents trying to buy formula during these difficult times.

During its recent survey, "Hanging on by a Thread: The Cumulative Impact of the Pandemic on Youth Who Have Been In Foster Care or Homeless," John Burton Advocates for Youth (2021) found foster youth reporting these significant challenges:

- 68% reported negative impacts to employment, including layoffs, reduced hours, and inability to find work
- 22% reported experiencing homelessness since the pandemic began
- 50% reported negative impacts on mental health
- 29% reported fearing being forced to leave their current living arrangement
- 100% reported at least one negative impact to schooling

Other recent surveys suggest that inaction now will dramatically increase homelessness, education disruption, mental health crisis, and food insecurity among Nevada's foster youth, while exacting a greater toll on the community to help deal with these issues later. Nevada is made stronger by its upcoming generation. The collective impact of leveraging the American Rescue Plan Act funding to continue the additional \$200 supplement through June 20, 2023, will not only directly affect those currently in need, but also prevent spending later for those who become homeless or no longer employable.

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Unless we all act, September 30, 2022, marks the end of a crucial period of support for these children. We urge you to add your voice to ours and support the continuation of the additional \$200 supplement through June 20, 2023, and show we value all of Nevada's children.

Without critical support from our leaders, Nevada's children fail. When our children fail, Nevada's families fail and we as a state fail. There must be action to ensure children and families are equipped with the essential services and supports to help guide a generation into greatness. We are asking that you financially support the following investments:

Crisis Stabilization
Wrap Around/Intensive Care Coordination
Intensive Family In-Home Services
Family to Family Peer Support
Emergency and Planned Respite
Mobile Crisis Response for Clark Schools
Emergency Funding Crisis Care
MyAvatar
Workforce Development
UMC Workforce Development
Unified Billing Support for School-Based Health
System of Care Oversight
Washoe County Our Home for Women
Clark County Forensic/Homeless
Washoe County Sheriff Mobile Crisis
Clark County Clinical Division
China Springs
Supported Living Arrangements IDD
PRTF Highest Intensity Youth
Child Welfare Independent Living Subsidy
Day Treatment Program SNCAS
Day Treatment NNCAS
Neurodevelopmental Disorders (autism, etc.)
Emergency Staffing Tenancy Improvements DWTC

By investing in these services and supports you are investing in the lives of Nevada's children and Nevada's families. When the most vulnerable of us win, we all as a state win.

Sincerely

Jim M. Rudee, chair

The Board of Directors
Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada