

**Introduced by Senator Liu**  
**(Coauthor: Senator Lowenthal)**  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Beall)

January 25, 2011

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An act to add Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2110) to Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to runaway and homeless youth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 123, as introduced, Liu. California Runaway, Homeless, and Exploited Youth Act.

Existing law establishes the Runaway Youth and Families in Crises Project, and imposes certain administrative duties on the California Emergency Management Agency relating to the operation of that project. Existing law requires the state advisory group established pursuant to the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to perform specified functions relating to the collection and dissemination of information relating to homeless youth.

This bill would enact the California Runaway, Homeless, and Exploited Youth Act, and would require the California Emergency Management Agency to provide information, coordination, and support services to public and private entities serving runaway, homeless, and exploited youth. The bill would also require the agency to develop a statewide plan for runaway, homeless, and exploited youth, as specified, and to present this plan to the Legislature by January 1, 2013. The bill would make related findings and declarations.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) Providing services to runaway, homeless, and exploited  
4 youth is extremely challenging due to the need for services in a  
5 great number of diverse, yet overlapping, areas such as education,  
6 housing, employment, community support, family support and  
7 reunification, health care, and counseling.

8 (b) Despite the fact that more than 200,000 unaccompanied  
9 children, between 12 and 17 years of age, experience homelessness  
10 each year in California, the state has no clear and coordinated  
11 policy to reduce youth homelessness.

12 (c) Research has shown that runaway, homeless, and exploited  
13 youth are at great risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation,  
14 mental health disabilities, chemical or alcohol dependency, and  
15 death.

16 (d) The cost of youth homelessness to the State of California is  
17 also considerable. Youth who experience homelessness are  
18 disproportionately likely to be arrested and incarcerated as adults,  
19 costing California taxpayers over fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)  
20 per inmate in 2010.

21 (e) Worsening matters is the current economic recession, which  
22 has expanded youth homelessness by limiting employment  
23 opportunities for youth. As of July 2010, unemployment among  
24 transition-age youth reached 49 percent, the highest level since  
25 the Bureau of Labor Statistics began collecting data in 1948.

26 (f) While the California Emergency Management Agency is the  
27 state agency that administers programming related to youth  
28 homelessness and exploitation, it does so without a strong mandate  
29 or clear vision as to how its activities and funding will significantly  
30 impact youth homelessness in California. It is also limited by a  
31 budget of just three hundred fifty-six thousand dollars (\$356,000)  
32 per year, as of 2010, to serve all of California's homeless youth.

33 (g) The issues that face runaway, homeless, and exploited youth  
34 are so diverse, there is a great need for cooperation among private  
35 nonprofit entities and public entities serving these youth to break  
36 down barriers and provide more seamless, collaborative, and  
37 effective services.

1 (h) In the public sector, there is an additional need for enhanced  
2 cooperation among the departments of corrections, education,  
3 health care policy and financing, human services, public safety,  
4 public health, and the judiciary to more fully serve homeless and  
5 exploited youth.

6 (i) To address this serious issue, it is imperative that the state  
7 make an explicit commitment to ending youth homelessness and  
8 exploitation. It must ascertain the extent of the problem, our  
9 capacity to solve it, the cost of ending youth homelessness, and  
10 potential sources of necessary revenue.

11 SEC. 2. Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2110) is added  
12 to Division 2.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

13  
14 CHAPTER 4. CALIFORNIA RUNAWAY, HOMELESS, AND  
15 EXPLOITED YOUTH ACT  
16

17 2110. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the  
18 California Runaway, Homeless, and Exploited Youth Act.

19 2111. For purposes of this chapter:

20 (a) "Exploited youth" means an individual under 18 years of  
21 age who is trafficked or prostituted, involved in pornography or  
22 stripping, a victim of rape or incest, or engaged in survival sex,  
23 which is the exchange of sex for money or other consideration,  
24 such as food or shelter, in order to ensure his or her survival.

25 (b) "Homeless youth" means an individual under 18 years of  
26 age who is unable to live in a safe environment with a relative and  
27 lacks safe alternative living arrangements, or an individual under  
28 24 years of age who is without shelter.

29 (c) "Runaway youth" means a nonemancipated individual under  
30 18 years of age who leaves his or her home or a place of legal  
31 residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

32 2112. (a) The California Emergency Management Agency  
33 shall provide information, coordination, and support services to  
34 public and private entities serving runaway, homeless, and  
35 exploited youth.

36 (b) The agency shall develop a statewide plan for runaway,  
37 homeless, and exploited youth, and shall present this plan to the  
38 Legislature by January 1, 2013. In developing this plan, the agency  
39 shall do all of the following:

- 1 (1) Determine the statewide demand for shelter, housing, and  
2 supportive services for runaway, homeless and exploited youth.
- 3 (2) Identify data and outcome measures from which to evaluate  
4 public investment in runaway, homeless, and exploited youth  
5 services.
- 6 (3) Propose a consistent revenue stream from state government  
7 to meet the demand for shelter, housing, and services for these  
8 youth.
- 9 (4) Examine the federal definition of “status offender” and make  
10 legislative recommendations regarding the relevant sections of  
11 state law.
- 12 (5) Specify the role of the child welfare system in preventing  
13 and addressing homelessness for minors experiencing abuse and  
14 neglect.
- 15 (6) Specify the role of law enforcement in responding to  
16 runaway youth.
- 17 (c) When developing the statewide plan pursuant to subdivision  
18 (b), the agency shall utilize an open planning process that engages  
19 stakeholders statewide, including runaway, homeless, and exploited  
20 youth, parents, homeless youth service providers, advocates, and  
21 researchers, and representatives of interested state agencies.
- 22 (d) The agency shall administratively interpret the provisions  
23 of this chapter, in consultation with the State Department of Social  
24 Services, the State Department of Education, the Department of  
25 Housing and Community Development, the State Department of  
26 Mental Health, and any other state department that may be  
27 appropriate.

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