

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 4, 2011

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 7, 2011

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 123**

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**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 amended, 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.

This bill would enact the California Runaway, Homeless, and Exploited Youth Act, and would ~~encourage the Senate Office of Research to collaborate with the California Emergency Management Agency~~ *require, subject to the availability of adequate resources, the California Emergency Management Agency to develop, in collaboration with the Senate Office of Research and various interested parties, a statewide plan for runaway, homeless, and exploited youth, as specified.* 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 youth 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 runaway,  
5 homeless, and 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 is essential to ascertain the extent of the problem,  
9 our capacity to solve it, the cost of ending youth homelessness,  
10 and 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. The purpose of this chapter is to lay the groundwork for  
20 a comprehensive solution to youth homelessness.

21 2112. For purposes of this chapter:

22 (a) "Agency" means the California Emergency Management  
23 Agency.

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

29 (c) "Homeless youth" means an individual under 18 years of  
30 age who is unable to live in a safe environment with a relative and  
31 lacks safe alternative living arrangements, or an individual under  
32 24 years of age who is without shelter.

33 (d) "Runaway youth" means an unemancipated individual under  
34 18 years of age who leaves his or her home or a place of legal  
35 residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

36 ~~2113. (a) The Legislature encourages the Senate Office of~~  
37 ~~Research to collaborate with the agency to develop a statewide~~  
38 ~~plan for runaway, homeless, and exploited youth. The plan may~~  
39 ~~include all of the following:~~

1     2113. (a) *Subject to the availability of adequate resources,*  
2 *the agency shall develop a statewide plan reflecting a range of*  
3 *cost-effective, evidence-based practices for runaway, homeless,*  
4 *and exploited youth. The agency shall develop this plan in*  
5 *collaboration with the Senate Office of Research and a broad*  
6 *spectrum of stakeholders responsible for addressing the needs of*  
7 *this population, including, but not limited to, government agencies,*  
8 *youth advocates, and others with expertise in the areas of social*  
9 *services, mental health, housing, education, and public safety, as*  
10 *well as homeless youth service providers and individuals who are*  
11 *runaway, homeless, or exploited youth. The plan shall include all*  
12 *of the following:*

13     (1) A determination of the statewide demand for shelter,  
14 housing, and supportive services for runaway, homeless, and  
15 exploited youth.

16     (2) An identification of data and outcome measures from which  
17 to evaluate public investment in runaway, homeless, and exploited  
18 youth services.

19     (3) A proposal for a consistent revenue stream to meet the  
20 demand for shelter, housing, and services for these youth.

21     (4) An examination of the federal definition of “status offender”  
22 and make legislative recommendations regarding the relevant  
23 sections of state law.

24     (5) A description of the role of the child welfare system in  
25 preventing and addressing homelessness for minors experiencing  
26 abuse and neglect.

27     (6) A description of the role of law enforcement in responding  
28 to runaway youth.

29     (b) When the plan is created, the agency shall be the entity  
30 responsible for the coordination of information, support services,  
31 and other resources for public and private entities serving runaway,  
32 homeless, and exploited youth in California.