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The Cost of Being Poor: Entering Foster Care and Losing Hope

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THE COST OF BEING POOR: ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND LOSING HOPE

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Top Reasons for Child Entry into Foster Care

Physical Abuse = 12%

Parent Incarceration = 18%

Neglect = 45%

Substance Abuse = 58%



These same reasons are common factors of poverty. Thus, there is a connection.

Challenges of Foster Care

Not enough focus on family unification

Those who are Hispanic and/or African American are extremely overrepresented and with numerous referrals for foster care from high poverty areas; indicators of bias, cultural incompetency, and poor retention of Child Protection Services (CPS) workers.

The most funding in the child welfare system is allotted towards foster care, but not always given directly to the foster child or Family Preservation Services (FPS)

Lifelong adverse conditions and experiences (i.e. bullying, mental health conditions) follow the child from foster care into unstable adulthood.

“Poverty is not neglect. Just because you’re born into poverty doesn’t mean you have to be taken in by the system and chewed back out into poverty as an adult.” – Former foster child

Poverty Statistics

- 47% of families who have their children placed in foster care live below the federal poverty guidelines.
- 60% of children in foster care have a chronic medical condition.
- 40% of foster youth nationwide have some sort of special education need(s).
- 65% of foster youth have an annual income below the poverty line at age 23.
- Less than 3% of those leaving foster care earn a college degree.
- 75% of former foster kids are or were in a U.S. prison at some point in their lives.

The Foster Care Housing Crisis

As the number of foster youth continues to rise in America, many state child welfare systems struggle to recruit and keep enough foster homes

In the first-ever report of its kind, *The Chronicle of Social Change* projects a continued increase in the number of children in foster care, as well as a concurrent shortfall in the number of foster homes to accommodate them.

While the federal government tracks the overall number of youth in foster care, the latest count of 427,910 was for federal fiscal year 2015.¹ The next count of children in foster care will be released later this year and will encompass fiscal year 2016.

Based on 2017 figures provided to *The Chronicle* by state agencies,

Key Findings

1. At least half of the states in the U.S. have seen their foster care capacity decrease between 2012 and 2017. Either these states have fewer beds and more foster youth, or any increase in beds has been dwarfed by an even greater increase in foster children and youth.

Many foster children are trapped in a vicious poverty cycle with little to no financial resources throughout their stay in foster care and after they leave. How can we prevent this?

UNIMAGINABLE

CURRENT BUDGET WILL ELIMINATE CASA PROGRAMS ACROSS LOUISIANA

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has served abused and neglected children in Louisiana for over 30 years. The countless life changing impacts that have been made are being erased.

The current budget has been cut so drastically that the Louisiana Supreme Court will no longer be able to provide assistance and will have to eliminate CASA support. This would mean the closure of CASA programs throughout the state.

It is unimaginable to consider that CASA Advocates will no longer be available to foster children in Louisiana.

But, your voice can change this. We need you now. The special session begins Tuesday. Contact your legislators and demand their leadership in restoring funds to our Judiciary and the Louisiana Supreme Court.

#SaveCASA

TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS:

More than 4,000 children in Louisiana count on their CASA Advocates. CASA Advocates change the lives of vulnerable children, reduce their time spent in foster care, and ensure productive futures for Louisiana's children. Judges rely on CASA volunteers in making life-changing decisions for children. CASA is an effective public-private partnership. CASA saves money for Louisiana and invests in community volunteers as a solution. Fully restore judicial funding!

- Research shows that foster children who have a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) are 50% less likely to re-enter foster care (ADVOCACY WORKS = more funding needed)
- Become involved, educate yourself on the policies, challenge legislators on how funds are allocated
- More comprehensive training for Child Protection Services (CPS) to break down the stigma of foster care kids and possibly decrease unnecessary referrals
- Priority goals for impoverished families at risk: family engagement, case planning, service coordination, poverty prevention, and intervention delivery