



# News Release

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For Immediate Release  
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## **BETTER SUPPORT FOR YOUTH LEAVING CARE MAKES SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SENSE**

VICTORIA – British Columbia’s Representative for Children and Youth strongly supports a report issued today by Fostering Change, calling on the B.C. government to ensure that a basic package of support is put in place to help youth as they transition out of provincial care.

*Opportunities in Transition: An Economic Analysis of Investing in Youth Aging out of Foster Care* says a relatively small investment in the approximately 1,000 youth who leave care at the age of 19 each year is not only the right thing to do, it is also a sound economic decision. The report estimates that it would cost government about \$57 million annually to adequately support youth between the ages of 19 and 24, compared to the current cost of “adverse outcomes” for them, estimated at more than \$220 million.

Today’s report builds on the work of the Representative’s Office, which has advocated since 2013 for post-secondary tuition waivers and other supports for youth aging out of care. As a result of that campaign, 12 B.C. post-secondary institutions now offer financial assistance to more than 100 students.

“Youth who have been in government care often do not have the same family support systems that many of their contemporaries do as they progress into adulthood,” Representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond said. “Government has parental responsibility for these youth, and that means providing the support they need to move on to successful, independent lives. In addition to a compelling social argument, today’s report shows that there is also solid financial reasoning behind providing more help for these youth between the ages of 19 and 24.”

The Representative’s 2014 report, *On Their Own: Examining the Needs of B.C. Youth as They Leave Government Care*, found that without sufficient support, youth leaving care were not as likely to attend post-secondary school and more likely to have trouble finding work, to become homeless, to run afoul of the criminal justice system and to have mental health or substance use issues – at a great cost to both themselves and society.

“Youth leaving care often face other significant challenges – many have had adverse and often traumatic life experiences that can affect their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development,” Turpel-Lafond said. “In every way, it makes sense for our society to assist in their transition.”

Today’s report is available here: [http://www.fosteringchange.ca/opportunities\\_in\\_transition\\_out\\_now](http://www.fosteringchange.ca/opportunities_in_transition_out_now)

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