

PRESS RELEASE

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Assemblymember Gipson: Detained juveniles and foster youth deserve access to the Internet

The United Nations has gone so far as to declare access to Internet a human right

SACRAMENTO, Calif --- Today, Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson (D-Carson) reintroduced a bill to ensure youth in foster care and youth in local juvenile detention facilities have access to computer technology and the Internet.

"As a former law enforcement officer, I have seen the challenges that our most disadvantaged youth face firsthand. Technology is an essential component of modern communication and a lack of digital literacy can derail a youth's life for years to come. Youth who are in foster care may be abruptly moved from one out-of-home placement to another, leaving behind friends and family that they have no means of communicating with," said Asm. Gipson. "Similarly, juveniles in local detention facilities have a prime opportunity to rehabilitate and reenter their community. Without Internet, detained juveniles may not be able to access educational materials to finish school and could be trapped in the school-to-prison pipeline. AB 2448 is so important because it gives our most disadvantaged youth an opportunity to thrive."

Sponsored by the Youth Law Center, AB 2448 would ensure that a child who is a dependent of the court or a ward of the juvenile court in foster care is entitled to participate in activities that involve the Internet. This bill also requires that minors detained in juvenile hall or camp have access to Internet for educational purposes and to communicate with their family.

"Technology is now so fundamental to our society," said Lucy Carter, Policy Advocate for the Youth Law Center. "This bill helps ensure that our most vulnerable youth, those in out-of-home placements, don't get left out of the technology loop, but instead can use technology to gain the skills and maintain the supportive relationships they need to succeed. We thank Assemblymember Gipson for authoring this bill and for being a champion for these youth."

Asm. Gipson authored AB 811 last year, a similar bill which was vetoed by Governor Brown because of mandates placed on the Department of Juvenile Justice. In the veto message, the Governor directed the Department to create a plan to provide Internet access to their facilities. AB 2448 continues the work of AB 811 to ensure all detained juveniles and foster youth have access to technology that they deserve.

AB 2448 is currently awaiting assignment by the Assembly Rules Committee.

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