

**SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER FOR INCREASED FOSTER CARE OMBUDSPERSON  
INDEPENDENCE – AB 317 (PATTERSON)**

SUBMIT ON COMPANY/OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD

July 2, 2021

The Hon. Lisa Calderon  
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 124  
Sacramento, CA 95817

**Re: SUPPORT FOR AB 317 (PATTERSON)**

Dear Chair Calderon:

*I/we/organization is/am* writing to express support for AB 317 (Patterson), which will give more independence to the office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson, the agency tasked with being the watchdog over programs serving the State’s vulnerable children in foster care.

California’s Foster Care Ombudsperson currently does not have the independence needed to fulfill its role. Currently, the Ombudsperson is appointed by the head of the Department of Social Services. As the National Center for Youth Law has observed: “This structure creates direct conflicts of interest—or, at the very least, the appearance of conflicts—because the department director controls all aspects of the program’s operation and allocation of resources. .”<sup>1</sup>

For the Foster Care Ombudsperson to be effective, the Office must be more independent of the Department that it has been tasked to oversee. AB 317 will give the Office this independence by making the position an appointee of the Secretary of California Health and Human Services rather than the Department, and by formalizing the Ombudsperson’s independence in code .

For these reasons, *I/we/organization* support(s) AB 317 and urge an “aye” vote.

Sincerely,

ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL

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<sup>1</sup> <https://youthlaw.org/publication/ca-foster-care-ombudsman-needs-more-authority-independence/>