 <p>ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK STATE YMCAs YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT Legislative Bill</p>	<p>ASSEMBLY Bill # 4</p>		
<p>Authors: Madison Kulp, Abigail Hart, Kathryn Vittie and Maria Lesser</p>	<p>Referred to Committee: B</p>		
<p>School: Cleveland Hill</p>	<p>Action on the Bill</p>		
<p>WWW.YMCANYS.ORG/YAG</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>House</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</p> </td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>Senate</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>House</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</p>	<p>Senate</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</p> <p>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</p>
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1 AN ACT TO : Mandate all minors under the age of eighteen who are placed in foster care system
2 participate in group or individual counseling sessions in their community.

3
4 ***The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate
5 and Assembly, do enact as follows:***

6
7 **PURPOSE:** We initiate this bill as a way to provide all minors in the foster care system proper
8 mental health treatment to ensure a stable future.

9
10 **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS :**

11 Section 1 :

12 Group counseling: A form of psychosocial treatment where a small group of patients meet
13 regularly to talk, interact, and discuss problems with each other and the group leader (therapist).


14
15 Individual counseling: A process through which clients work one-on-one with a trained therapist—
16 in a safe, caring, and confidential environment—to explore their feelings, beliefs, or behaviors,
17 work through challenging or influential memories, identify aspects of their lives that they would
18 like to change, better understand themselves and others, set personal goals, and work toward
19 desired change.

20
21 Foster care: A system in which a minor has been placed into a ward, group home, or private home
22 of a state-certified caregiver, referred to as a "foster parent". The placement of the child is
23 normally arranged through the government or a social service agency.

24
25 Minors: Any child under the age of eighteen years old.

26
27 Section 2 : Any minor under eighteen who is in the foster care system be admitted into a support
28 group or individual counseling session in their local community led by a professional psychiatrist
29 with other minors in the same situation once a week until cleared by a professional psychiatrist.

30
31 **JUSTIFICATION:** There are 18,397 children in the foster care system in New York State. Almost
32 half of these minors will receive benefits of the welfare program once the children age out of the
33 foster care system. Less than half of the minors will become employed, only forty to fifty percent

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1 will go on to have a high school diploma, and less than six percent will earn a two or four year
2 college degree. Eighty percent of the prison population have been in the foster care system at one
3 point in their life and girls in the foster care system are six hundred times more likely to become
4 pregnant before they reach the age of twenty one. Minors who have faced a trauma are fifteen
5 times more likely to attempt suicide, four times more likely to become an alcoholic, four times
6 more likely to inject or use drugs and three times more likely to experience depression.

7
8 About nine thousand foster care children will become a recipient of welfare. Due to this our
9 Federal government pays over one billion dollars to support these now of age foster kids along
10 with the other million Americans. If these youths were to receive counseling they could learn how
11 to establish a stable life for themselves instead of being forced out of the system and on their
12 own. In addition, these counseling sessions will give the minors a feeling of community and give
13 them reassurance that they are not alone. Furthermore, minors in group counseling sessions as
14 well as the individual will learn how to be independent. By providing these adolescents with
15 mandatory counseling the government will save money by decreasing the amount of people
16 receiving welfare benefits and therefore lower the amount of money spent on the benefits.

17
18 **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:** To cover the cost for the counseling sessions, all health insurance
19 companies must pay for the psychiatrist. The group counseling sessions will significantly lower the
20 cost of the sessions than if all of the minors received individual sessions. However, the money
21 saved on welfare benefits will exceed the cost of the psychiatrist. The minors will be done with
22 sessions when the assigned psychiatrist clears them. The health insurance companies will inhibit
23 the psychiatrists from lying about the readiness of the minors because they will not want to cover
24 the cost of anything more than needed.

25
26 **EFFECTIVE DATE:** November of 2019

27
28 Source: <http://www.recognizetrauma.org/statistics.php/>
29 <http://amarillo.com/news/local-news/2012-06-24/what-comes-next>
30 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story.php?storyId=125594259>
31 <https://www.cfrny.org/news-blog/foster-care-facts/>
32 <http://affcny.org/fostercare/>