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Representative Fred Dyson

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House Passes Foster Child Adjustment Bill

HB 209 Offers Help in Transition to Independent Living

(JUNEAU) – Alaska children who grow up in foster care under state custody would have some extra help in making the transition to independent living under a bill that passed the House unanimously today.

Sponsored by the House Health, Education and Social Services Committee, House Bill 209 directs the state to develop and implement a program that would include assistance with independent living skills, employment or employment training, education, counseling and other services.

Rep. Fred Dyson (R-Eagle River), who sponsored the House Bill 209 as chairman of the House Health, Education and Social Services Committee, said the bill would qualify the state to receive federal assistance funds under the [Foster Care Independence Act of 1999](#).

“This is for children that have been in state custody, but were never adopted,” said Dyson. “Many of these children have had many placements, and some of them still face some significant challenges as they reach the age of majority and look ahead to life on their own.”

Dyson said the bill would cover about 200 children in state custody, about 30 of them approaching 18 years of age this year. Under HB 209, these young people could be eligible for a range of service that includes: education or vocational training; assistance in obtaining basic education and training; career and employment services; training in basic life skills; financial assistance in paying housing and utility bills; and mentoring and counseling.

[HB 209](#) moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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