



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

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Arizona Unanimously Passes Critical Reform to Improve Graduation Rates of Children in Foster Care

Phoenix, Ariz. - House Bill 2645, adopted unanimously on April 2, 2024, will improve educational outcomes for children in foster care, and it places Arizona among states at the forefront of ensuring educational opportunities for youth in care.

As the Arizona Community Foundation documented in [Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap](#), children in foster care experience the lowest graduation rate of any demographic in the state, with just [40%](#) of youth graduating in four years. Youth in care are frequently forced to change placements, and students lose continuity in instruction, lose credit for partially completed coursework at previous schools, are more likely to attend poor-performing schools and struggle to satisfy graduation requirements that change from school to school.

This was the case with Johnny, an Arizona youth who was in foster care for thirteen years and lived in more than 40 placements. At age 16, Johnny had only a few high school credits because his partial credits did not count toward graduation.

House Bill 2645, sponsored by Representative Rachel Jones, will help high school students in foster care receive the credits they earned, including partial credits for completed coursework. Specifically, House Bill 2645 will:

- Establish guidelines for schools to calculate partial credits earned and subjects mastered.
- Prioritize the application of transfer credits as core credits for graduation.
- Tie graduation requirements to the minimum set by the state board of education.
- Bring graduation within reach by working with teens in care to develop a graduation plan.

This legislation builds on prior reforms advanced by the Center for the Rights of Abused Children to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children in foster care. It includes removing barriers to accessing special education services, requiring timely screenings for special education, and reducing unnecessary school moves. With the Governor's anticipated signature, this new law will help more teens in foster care graduate from high school on time, leading to greater self-sufficiency and prosperity.

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About the Center for the Rights of Abused Children: The Center for the Rights of Abused Children believes every child deserves a safe and loving home. Join our mission today, thecenterforchildren.org.

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