



## Making foster kids our kids

### Halting the decline in and rebuilding the foster-care system

Foster care has been in precipitous and inexcusable decline in Washington. Between 2008 and 2015 there has been a 20 percent reduction in foster homes. Complaints of discord and disarray are numerous and widespread. Foster children in Washington are in care an average of 18 months—double the length of time children stay in Colorado’s system, for instance.

Foster children in Washington are denied stability. Moves are frequent. Foster children were lodged in motels 883 times last year. These stays require paying two social workers and sometimes a security guard to supervise the children overnight.

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The systemic neglect and decay of our foster-care system cannot be ignored.

The MCC budget would halt the loss of foster homes. We **triple** the state investment for respite care for foster parents who need a break – and a reminder of support.

**The MCC budget triples the state investment for respite care – for foster parents needing a break.**

We reduce the pressure on the foster system by eliminating means testing for placements with relatives. Our budget restructures adoption-support payments to encourage adoptions of older kids and those hardest to serve.

To encourage stability in children’s lives, the MCC budget would establish a case-review panel for cases that extend beyond 12 months.

To give kids hope for a better future, we expand the ability for adoptees and foster kids to qualify for College Bound Scholarships. Adoptees older than 14 and foster children with a GED qualify.

Our budget sends a message to foster parents that their work is valued, we have heard them, and we want to help them to help our kids.