

# Illinois: 18 and Out!

## DCFS FY'16 Budget Ejects Foster Youth from Care, College, Housing

- The 2010 U.S. Census survey reports that approximately 50% of men and 44% of women from 19 to 24 live at their family home with their parents.
- DCFS wards 18-21 don't have that option---the State of Illinois is their parent.
- That's why Illinois developed a program that cares for youth age 18-21 that has served as a national model.
- Illinois serves as the parent of DCFS 2,400 wards, 18-21, but the FY'16 budget expects something different for its wards than is expected from other children: complete self-reliance at 18.
- DCFS' FY'16 budget cuts ***\$147 million*** by eliminating care, services and housing support for 2,400 Illinois wards, age 18-21.
- Under Governor Rauner's proposed budget, DCFS wards who will lose their home and support services are:
  - Teenagers in foster care
  - Teenager in high school
  - Teenagers in residential treatment
  - DCFS wards attending college
  - Young people needing placement and support services who have with severe mental health needs
  - 500 DCFS wards who are parents of their own young children
- Seventeen year olds who are still in high school can expect to be cut from care when they turn 18 – even if they are still enrolled in school.
- Assuring foster children remain under the protection of the State until 21, when needed, generates benefits for both the children and the state:
  - Increased likelihood of obtaining post-secondary education
  - Increased lifetime earnings
  - Delayed pregnancy
  - Increased father involvement with their children
  - Delayed homelessness
- Governor Rauner's proposed budget walks away from our responsibility as a state for DCFS wards
- Since FY'10, the DCFS budget has been **cut \$168 million** by the legislature.
- **The DCFS FY'16 budget should be held harmless and exempt from further budget cuts.**