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Highlights from the June 16, 2015 Legislative & Policy Committee meeting

We had over 30 participants in the first MISSEY Legislative & Policy Committee meeting, even as the Warriors played out their winning championship game!

We started off the meeting with introductions, and then Sean Sullivan, Principal of WestEnd Strategies, talked about what Committee members could do at the local level, write letters to the Oakland City Council to advocate for additional funding to the City's budget for housing for homeless and exploited youth. Sean provided us with the colored paper and envelopes and walked us through what the letter should say, and the letters targeted specific Oakland City Council members. Interested Legislative & Policy Committee members were also encouraged to attend City Council Budget meetings to advocate on behalf of CSEC, and in the end advocacy helped tremendously. While we were not able to get more funding for CSEC, we were able to secure the \$110,000 in the budget that passed which was not in the budget proposal as of June 17th.

We also brainstormed about what the Legislative & Policy Committee should focus on. Consistent themes included creating legislation and policies on: Education and awareness about CSEC for schools (students and teachers/staff), the medical field, and law enforcement; Empower survivors by including them in leadership roles and requiring survivors be present when creating policies and legislation; Funding for research to collect data on the numbers of CSEC which will allow for more services and funding for CSEC and at risk youth; Continued education and employment readiness training as well as increasing employment opportunities for transitional aged youth (TAY); Mandatory medical exam once a youth is identified as CSEC or at risk of CSEC; Support services to CSEC as they transition out of criminal justice system; Coordination between the systems when CSEC transition in and out of the criminal justice system; Stop criminalizing CSEC and instead identify them as victims/survivors who need support services; Specific policies for CSEC boys because they are less likely to self-report and law enforcement is less likely to identify as a victim; Transitional housing for homeless and exploited youth; Mandatory training about CSEC for any staff in residential programs; Demand legislation to criminalize the purchaser and buyer of CSEC.

Our next Legislative & Policy Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22nd from 6:30pm to 8pm and it will be hosted at National Center for Youth Law located directly across the street from the MISSEY offices at 405 14th Street, 16th Floor, Conference Room.