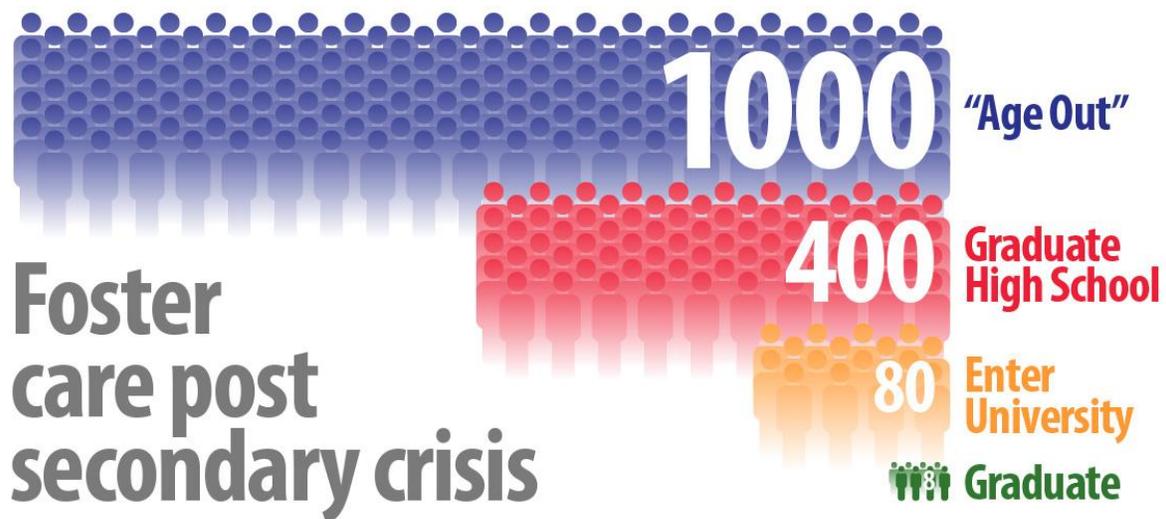


For Immediate Release
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FORMER FOSTER KIDS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO FIX CHILD PROTECTION POST-SECONDARY CRISIS



Toronto, Ontario – Today, the Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada (Child Welfare PAC) urges provincial and territorial governments to solve the post-secondary crisis facing foster children.

Research shows only 40 per cent of foster youth finish high school. Of those, just 20 per cent pursue university studies compared to 60 per cent of peers. Only ten per cent graduate compared to 30 per cent of peers. This means in Ontario, only eight out of 1,000 foster children graduate of studies bear out.

"More needs to be done to level the playing field because post-secondary is often the only way to be socially mobile for those raised in care," said Jane Kovarikova, Founder of the Child Welfare PAC and a former foster child in Ontario.

Studies show post-secondary education opens up the opportunity for more earnings and reduces the risk of foster children ending up on the streets or behind bars.

While tuition waivers for post-secondary schools are offered in some provinces for former foster children, most do not qualify due to unrealistic age limitations. Youth struggle to make age cut-offs after facing eviction from the care system at age 18 with limited support.

That is why we will work with governments to:

1. ensure all kids apply for post-secondary before they are evicted from care,
2. incentivize post-secondary institutions to support these students,
3. standardize and correct privacy laws that limit some institutions from offering these waivers.

“Discussions with both government and opposition in Ontario have been supportive of increasing post-secondary access for those raised in care. We are optimistic and hope to keep the momentum going,” said Kovarikova.

Recently, the Child Welfare PAC worked with Laurentian University to waive tuition for Crown Wards of any age who were in care over a year. Similar efforts are underway across the country, and another five schools are expected to follow suit imminently.

Kovarikova encourages colleges and universities to connect with the Child Welfare PAC. “You are the ones levelling the playing field for kids like us every day. Let’s go further and embed opportunity permanently into the system structure.”

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What is the Child Welfare PAC:

The Child Welfare PAC is a federal not-for-profit that represents the interests of children raised by the government. The advisory board consists of professionals from academia, law, business, advocacy & public service who have lived experience in child protection systems. The complete advocacy agenda may be reviewed here: www.childwelfarepac.com

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