FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2026

Foster Youth Lead Powerful Panel for Foster Care Awareness Month
California Youth Connection Celebrates 25 Years of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights

Sacramento, CA - Ten foster youth leaders from across California are convening in Sacramento for California Youth Connection's (CYC) Shadow Day event from May 11-13, 2026. Current and former foster youth will "shadow" 10 California legislators and learn what it's like to work at the state capitol. On day 2 of the convening, and in recognition of Foster Care Awareness Month, CYC will host a youth-led panel discussion celebrating the 25 year anniversary of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights. California Youth Connection played a significant role in advocating for and passing the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, and it became a model for the nation.

Foster Care Awareness Month Youth Panel
On Tuesday, May 12 from 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m. at the Sacramento Holiday Inn will be a youth-led panel discussion. This panel will bring together youth leaders, foster care advocates, and policymakers to reflect on the progress the Foster Youth Bill of Rights has made in the last 25 years, and what still needs to change. The panel will feature youth leaders from across California who have directly navigated the foster care system. Speakers will share lived experiences, highlight gaps in implementation, and offer policy recommendations to strengthen protections for current and future foster youth.

This panel event also serves as a call to action for decision makers, community partners, and the public to recommit to upholding the rights of foster youth. For 25 years, the Foster Youth Bill of Rights has served as an important foundation for protecting the dignity, safety, and well-being of young people in California's foster care system. This unique event centers and uplifts the voices of those most impacted - young people with lived experience - to share how these rights show up in practice and what systems must continue to evolve.

About the Event
Members of the media are invited to attend the panel on May 12 to ask questions about the impact of the 25-year milestone, including: system accountability, state policy, youth-led advocacy, and solutions.
Event: Foster Care Awareness Month Youth Panel - 25 Years of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026
Time: 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m.
Location: Sacramento Holiday Inn (300 J St, Sacramento, CA 95814). River View on the 16th floor.

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About California Youth Connection

California Youth Connection (CYC) is a youth-led nonprofit organization that develops and grows leaders who empower each other and their communities to transform the foster care system through legislative and policy change. The Foster Care Awareness Month Youth Panel exemplifies CYC's commitment to ensuring foster youth are not only present in policy conversations, but leading them.

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For more information, interview requests, or event details please contact Melissa Cortez, CYC Communications Manager at melissa@calyouthconn.org.