

DATE

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

State Capital NAME

ADDRESS

Dear Governor \_\_\_\_\_,

Recently, I attended the Rootstech conference in Salt Lake City where I was in awe watching a presentation by a non-profit organization, ConnectOurKids.org. Their search tool is geared to help child welfare professionals across the United States search for and connect foster kids with extended family or community members in the hope that they can gain support or even find a home.

This free, (yes - FREE) tool, should be used by CASA volunteers, social workers, child welfare advocates, and judges in the state of \_\_\_\_\_. I'm writing to you to help push that initiative.

There are more than 500,000 children in the foster care system in the U.S. The reason for that is most states look for a biological mother or father prior to placement, and not for any other family members. *This is something you can change.* We need this change in STATE where there are nearly X children (according to the latest Child Welfare statistics in YEAR). Connect Our Kids (COK) has tech users in 44 states using this tool, however, the states of Ohio and Mississippi have included COK in the budget to ensure that child welfare professionals have training to utilize this tool and hands-on assistance.

The foster care system is a direct pipeline to homelessness, prison, human trafficking, or early death. In fact, **two-thirds** of foster kids who age out of the system struggle with these barriers within the first 10 years. *I'm writing to you to help change this statistic.* I urge you to put in place a mandate that all state CASA volunteers, social workers, child advocates use this free family search and engagement platform, and help these children connect with their roots.

We all have a story and every child deserves to know theirs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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## Facts To Share with Your Governor

There are currently 500,000 children in the American foster care system, 20,000 youth will age out of this system annually without the security of permanent supportive relationships.

Family Connections software helps to reduce the initial search and engagement time significantly (pilot testers reported a 60% reduction in time required for search and outreach actions). On average, respondents reported back that they found just over six times more connections for foster children and at-risk youth, and that they were able to do this in a little less than half the time that it took them prior to using the Family Connections software.

Teams can collaborate on cases, choose from a collection of helpful internet search services, or use the built-in search and import tool, People Search. People Search is another Connect Our Kids tool that finds online matches for information users enter about people in a case. People Search searches over 300 publicly available data sites and returns email addresses, phone numbers, physical addresses, social media accounts, and additional potential relatives.