



## Action Alerts on Youth Homelessness

October 2015

More than 20,000 children and youth were homeless in Pennsylvania in the past year. Many of these young people are helped, and many are not. Actions to improve how youth are helped are underway. Our Congressional leaders can make difference by supporting three key issues. You can help too! Here are summaries of these issues and steps you can take.

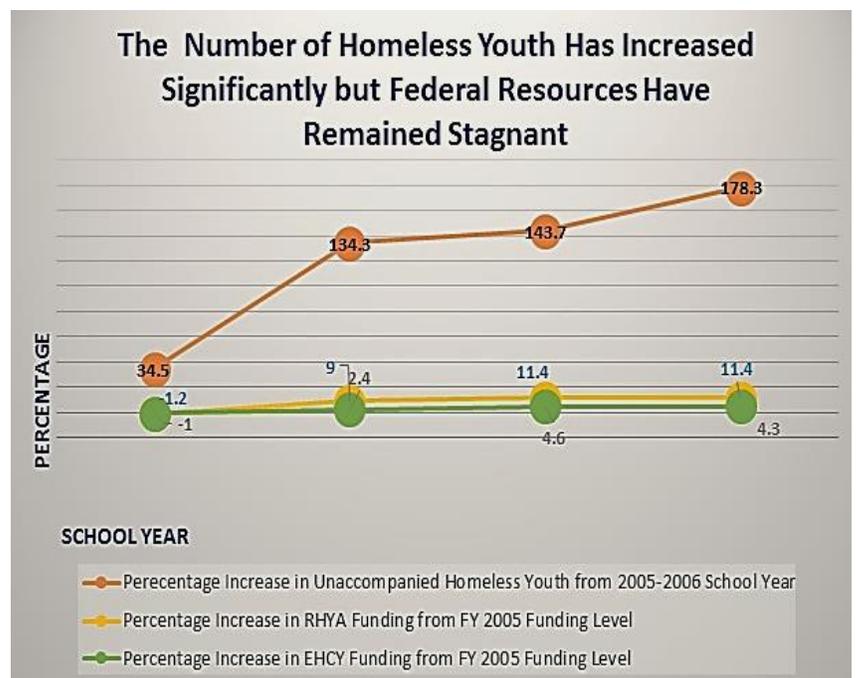
### Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act [S262/HR1779]

There are only 13 emergency housing units available in spite of the fact that there are thousands of homeless youth in Philadelphia. There are only about 10 youth shelters in all of Pennsylvania, yet more than 20,000 youth are homeless most every year. That's just one problem! There are many more.

For over 40 years, the [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) has

provided funding for street outreach, temporary emergency housing, and transitional housing services for runaway, homeless, and trafficked youth. These proposals make critical updates to the RHYA, including:

- new provisions **to combat sex trafficking** and other forms of forced labor and discrimination
- **increases** the length of stays in emergency shelter from 21 to 30 days, and
- **reauthorizes** the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nn4youth.org/policy-advocacy/rhya-2015-reauthorization/>

## ACTION STEPS

- **Send an email** to your U.S. House Representatives to urge them to cosponsor H.R. 1779, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA). Add your local community perspective and expertise to the form email provided. Send your emails [HERE](#).
- **Send an email** to U.S. Senators **Robert Casey** and **Patrick Toomey** to urge them to pass S. 262, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA). Add your local perspective and expertise by using this every easy-to-use this web form provided [HERE](#).
- **Organizational Sign-on** to this letter to show your organization's support for the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act ([S.262](#) and [H.R. 1779](#)) to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA). You can read and sign the letter to U.S. Congress [HERE](#).
- **Share** these hashtags with your social networks:
  - *#passRHYTPA*
  - *#RHYTPA*

## McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] Reauthorization legislation

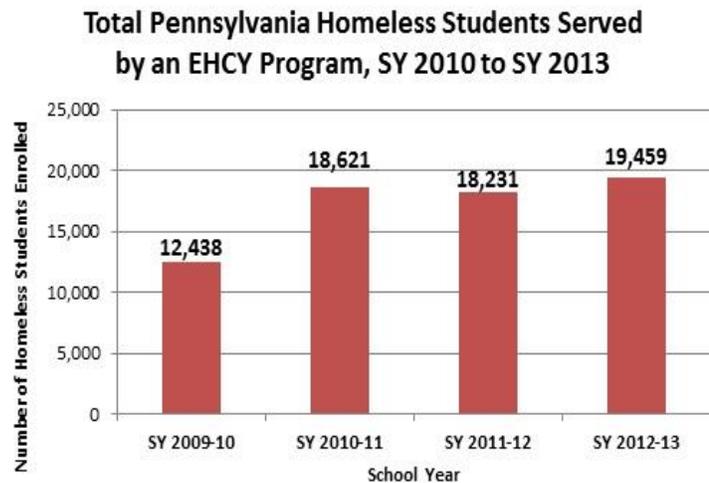
The public school system is the largest and most significant intervention for youth homelessness, providing both basic services as well as supports that are necessary to help students succeed. The proposed changes in the reauthorization of the EHCY program and of **Title I Part A** is an opportunity to make the law more effective by refining and improving key provisions, including:

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<http://www.naehcy.org/legislation-and-policy/legislative-updates/rhytpa-july-2014>

<http://nationalhomeless.org/40-years-runaway-homeless-youth-act/>

- **Reauthorization of McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY).**
- **Removing barriers** to enrollment, school stability, academic success, and access to Financial Aid for homeless and foster care youth
- **Identification** of homeless and foster care youth and children. <sup>2</sup>



## ACTION STEPS

- **Set up meetings** with your members of Congress and staff in your local district. Let them know how important the EHCY amendments are to the well-being of children and youth experiencing homelessness. **Urge** the inclusion of the Senate amendments in the final legislation. **Contact information for U.S. Senators** may be found [HERE](#). Contact information for U.S. Representatives may be found [HERE](#).
- **Download** and share NAEHCY's 2015 position paper on the education of homeless children and youth in ESEA reauthorization [HERE](#).
- **Learn more about EHCY proposed changes** [HERE](#).

## Homeless Children and Youth Act [H.R. 576/S. 256]

The EHCY program serves more than 1 million homeless children and youth, while the housing homeless system serves less than 330,000, thanks to two different federal definitions. This results in a lack of coordination at the local level, with homeless children not helped to the extent necessary. The Homeless Children and Youth Act (HCYA) **amends HUD's definition of homelessness** to include children and youth who are verified as homeless through:

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.naehcy.org/legislation-and-policy/legislative-updates/esea-reauthorization>

- HUD’s homeless assistance programs
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs
- Violence Against Women Act programs
- Public school district programs<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1 PEC joins Valley Youth House "#CouchesDontCount" campaign.

## ACTION STEPS

- **Send an email** to your members of Congress by clicking [HERE](#). Tell U.S. Senators Casey and Toomey and your U.S. Representative that all homeless children and youth need help—no matter where they happen to be staying!
- **Sign** your organization onto a national sign-on letter in support of HCYA [HERE](#).
- **Share** these hashtags with your social networks:
  - #HCYA
  - #EndYouthHomelessness

**Follow @PAHomelessYouth and @PECCaresPhilly on Twitter for updates on issues concerning homeless youth**

The People’s Emergency Center’s mission is to nurture families, strengthen neighborhoods, and drive change in West Philadelphia. Through a community of more than 240 housing units and five educational centers offering job training, parenting and early childhood education, financial education and planning, life-skills and technology coursework, PEC seeks to change the life trajectory for the women and children who seek its services and inspire them to aspire to new heights.

All inquiries can be sent to [policy@pec-cares.org](mailto:policy@pec-cares.org)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nn4youth.org/policy-advocacy/hcya>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/onecpd/assets/File/2013-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>

<http://helphomelesskidsnow.org/>