

Vilsack signs twin foster care measures

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) -- Gov. Tom Vilsack signed into law Friday companion measures aimed at boosting the state's foster care system, smoothing the transition out of foster care and enhancing the rights of foster parents.

"We have a responsibility to give all young Iowans the support they need to be successful in life," Vilsack said.

One measure the governor signed allows youngster to remain in foster care until they are 21. They currently leave the system at 18, and the governor said that comes at a time when they are moving to become independent and need support.

"Foster youth have not had this support to transition to independence," he said.

The second measure creates a Foster Parents Bill of Rights, designed to assure that foster parents have access to information about the children they are raising.

The signing came as Vilsack completed work on legislation sent to his desk by the Legislature. He had 30 days after lawmakers adjourned to sign or veto measures sent to him, and that deadline was Friday.