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ECONOMIST, PHIL JOHNSON HELPS WIN PRO BONO CASE FOR FOSTER FAMILIES SERVICES, ET AL.

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Econ One's Phil Johnson served as an economic expert for the plaintiffs in a recent case--California State Foster Parent Association, et al. v. John A. Wagner, Director of the California Department of Social Services, et al. The plaintiffs were a group of foster families who claimed that the State of California had failed to meet federal obligations to increase foster family home (FFH) reimbursements in line with increases in the cost of caring for a child. At issue was the net budget effect of an increase in reimbursement rates. The plaintiffs claimed that, were the State to increase its reimbursements and meet its obligations, much (or even all) of the State's incremental costs

would be offset by the return of children to FFHs from more expensive placements, such as group homes. Dr. Phil Johnson was retained to evaluate the effect on foster care costs if the State were to increase its reimbursements. In his expert report, Dr. Johnson demonstrated that the plaintiffs' claim was correct. His analysis quantified the cost savings that would arise from an increase in the number of lower cost FFH placements and the associated decrease in the number of placements in settings that provide more expensive, unneeded services. Dr. Johnson's findings were reflected in the judge's opinion, in which summary judgment was granted to the plaintiffs.