

# STATE OF ILLINOIS



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

FILED  
INDEX DEPARTMENT  
AUG 19 2016  
IN THE OFFICE OF  
SECRETARY OF STATE

EXECUTIVE ORDER

2016-10

## EXECUTIVE ORDER UPDATING TERMINOLOGY AT THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 14,800 youth in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) under the provisions of the Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505) and the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 (705 ILCS 405); and

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly passed House Bill 5665, authorizing foster parents to operate under a prudent parent standard encouraging foster youth to participate in appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities in a manner that allows that child to be involved in his or her community to the fullest extent possible; and

**WHEREAS**, those youth in the care of the State who participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities have better odds of developing long-term self-sufficiency after care; and

**WHEREAS**, foster youth have expressed displeasure with being labeled and treated differently from other youth; and

**WHEREAS**, the child welfare system currently utilizes terminology – such as “placement” instead of “home” and “ward” instead of “youth” – that makes youth in care feel they are part of a bureaucracy instead of a family; and

**WHEREAS**, the term “ward” is widely viewed by foster youth as particularly disparaging and becomes a dominant label for their legal status as distinct to that of other children and youth; and

**WHEREAS**, the way we label and treat children and youth has a substantial effect on their self-confidence and their trust in those they rely on for protection and nurture; and

**WHEREAS**, the terms “ward of the state” and “ward of the Department” are outdated and misused terms; and

**WHEREAS**, young people who have been part of the foster care system support the replacement of the outdated terminology “ward of the state” and “ward of the Department” with the term “youth in care”;

**THEREFORE**, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of Illinois, by virtue of the executive authority vested in me by Section 8 of Article V of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, do hereby order as follows:

### I. TERMINOLOGY

1. DCFS shall refrain from using the term “ward” except in situations required under Illinois statutes. DCFS shall instead use the term “youth in care” and other terms that show respect and encouragement to youth who are in State care.

2. DCFS shall review and revise its administrative rules to accomplish the purpose of this Executive Order.
3. DCFS shall work with the General Assembly to review all statutory references to youth as “wards” and support legislation replacing the term with “youth in care.”

## II. SAVINGS CLAUSE

This Executive Order does not contravene, and shall not be construed to contravene, any State or federal law or any collective bargaining agreement.

## III. PRIOR EXECUTIVE ORDERS

This Executive Order supersedes any contrary provision of any prior Executive Order.

## IV. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

If any part of this Executive Order is found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

## V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.



Bruce Rauner, Governor

Issued by the Governor: August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Filed with the Secretary of State: August \_\_\_\_, 2016

**FILED**  
INDEX DEPARTMENT  
AUG 19 2016  
IN THE OFFICE OF  
SECRETARY OF STATE