

Congress Can Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care in September



The House of Representatives passed the Fostering Connections to Success Act (H.R. 6307) in June and the Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to mark up a bill with similar provisions on September 10. The House Bill and the Chairman's Mark in the Senate, both of which are bipartisan and fully paid for, will help hundreds of thousands of children and youth by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving supports for children and youth while they are in foster care. They also will offer many American Indian children important federal protections and support for the first time.

It is important that House and Senate Bills to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care get enacted in September. They will:

Promote Permanent Families for Children in Foster Care

- **Subsidized Guardianship Payments for Relatives.** Helps children in foster care leave care to live permanently with grandparent and other relative guardians when they cannot be returned home or adopted and offers federal support to states to assist with subsidized guardianship payments to these families.
- **Notice to Relatives When Children Enter Care.** Increases opportunities for relatives to step in when children are removed from their parents and placed in foster care by ensuring they get notice of this removal.
- **Kinship Navigator Programs.** Supports Kinship Navigator programs that help connect children living with relatives, including those in foster care, to the supports and assistance for which they are eligible so that relative caregivers can effectively address the children's needs.
- **Keeping Siblings Together.** Preserves the sibling bond for children by encouraging the placement of siblings together when they must be removed from their parents' home.
- **Incentives for Adoption.** Increases incentives to states to find adoptive families for children in foster care, especially those with disabilities or other special needs and older youth.

Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care

- **Foster Care for Older Youth.** Helps youth who turn 18 in foster care without permanent families to remain in care to increase their opportunities for success as they transition to adulthood.
- **Educational Stability.** Helps children and youth in foster care achieve their educational goals by requiring that states ensure that they attend school, and that when placed in foster care, they remain in their same school where appropriate, or, when a move is necessary, get help transferring promptly to a new school.

Increase Support for American Indian and Alaska Native Children

- **Direct Access to Federal Support for Indian Tribes.** Offers, for the first time, many American Indian and Alaskan Native children federal assistance and protections through the federal foster care and adoption assistance programs that hundreds of thousands of other children are eligible for already.