

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7432

AN ACT

To modernize section 477 of part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve connections to housing, expand education and training opportunities, and modernize services to improve outcomes for foster youth transitioning into adulthood.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Fostering the Future
3 Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**
5 **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WHO**
6 **HAVE EXPERIENCED FOSTER CARE.**

7 Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
8 677) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking “aged out
10 of foster care” and inserting “experienced foster
11 care at age 14 or older”;

12 (2) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “age out of
13 foster care” and inserting “experience foster care at
14 age 14 or older”;

15 (3) in each of subsections (a)(6) and (i)(2), by
16 striking “16” and inserting “14”;

17 (4) in subsection (i)(3), by striking “in no event
18 may a youth participate in the program for more
19 than 5 years (whether or not consecutive)” and in-
20 serting “may not allow a youth to participate in the
21 program for more than 5 years (or, in the case of
22 a youth who was involved in a remedial education
23 activity referred to in paragraph (4)(B), for more
24 than 6 years), whether or not consecutive”;

25 (5) in subsection (i)(4)—

1 (A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read
2 as follows:

3 “(A) may be available for the cost of at-
4 tendance—

5 “(i) at an institution of higher edu-
6 cation, as defined in section 102 of the
7 Higher Education Act of 1965, including a
8 community college or postsecondary voca-
9 tional institution; or

10 “(ii) at a short-term training program
11 that is eligible for the Workforce Pell pro-
12 gram under section 401(k), as described in
13 section 481(b)(3) of the Higher Education
14 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1088(b)(3)), as
15 added by section 83002(b) of Public Law
16 119–21;”;

17 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as
18 subparagraph (C); and

19 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (A),
20 as so amended, the following:

21 “(B) may be available for costs—

22 “(i) associated with participation in
23 an apprenticeship program;

24 “(ii) to obtain a general equivalency
25 degree; or

1 “(iii) to receive remedial education;
2 and”; and

3 (6) in subsection (i), by adding at the end the
4 following:

5 “(7) In this section, the term ‘remedial edu-
6 cation’ means education or skill training needed to
7 support obtaining a high school diploma or quali-
8 fying for postsecondary education, training, or an
9 apprenticeship that is—

10 “(A) not already available through the
11 school district of the student or another free
12 local, State, or Federal program; and

13 “(B) is provided by an instructor with cre-
14 dentials relevant to the subject area of instruc-
15 tion, as determined by the State.”.

16 **SEC. 3. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
17 **VOUCHER AMOUNT AND PROVISION OF**
18 **GREATER SUPPORT FOR FOSTER YOUTH**
19 **PURSUING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i) of the Social Secu-
21 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)) is amended—

22 (1) in paragraph (3)—

23 (A) by striking “that program” and insert-
24 ing “that education or training program, (ex-
25 cept that the State may establish a grace period

1 to allow a youth to continue participation in ac-
 2 tivities described in paragraph (4)(A), after an
 3 assessment and consultation with the youth, if
 4 the State determines that reasonable cir-
 5 cumstances warrant the grace period”); and

6 (B) by striking “the program” and insert-
 7 ing “the voucher program”; and

8 (2) in paragraph (4)(C) (as so redesignated by
 9 section 2(5)(C) of this Act), by striking “\$5,000”
 10 and inserting “\$12,000”.

11 (b) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary of Health and
 12 Human Services, in consultation with youth who have ex-
 13 perience foster care, shall develop and issue model guid-
 14 ance to States and jurisdictions receiving allotments under
 15 section 477(c) of the Social Security Act for implementa-
 16 tion of the amendment made by subsection (a)(1) of this
 17 section.

18 **SEC. 4. IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND YOUTH AWARE-**
 19 **NESS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCH-**
 20 **ERS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i) of the Social Secu-
 22 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)), as amended by section 2(6)
 23 of this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

24 “(8) The State shall make reasonable efforts to
 25 ensure that eligible youth are aware of potential ben-

1 efits provided under this subsection, including by co-
2 ordinating with programs funded under subsection
3 (h)(1).

4 “(9) The program shall include a simplified,
5 user-tested, and standard form for youth to use to
6 apply for vouchers under the program, using stand-
7 ard terminology, that is easily accessible and avail-
8 able electronically.”.

9 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Section 477(d)(1) of such Act
10 (42 U.S.C. 677(d)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A State to which an
12 amount is paid from its allotment under subsection
13 (c)(1) may use the amount in any manner that is
14 reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of
15 this section, including outreach related to subsection
16 (i)(8). A State to which an amount is paid from its
17 allotment under subsection (c)(3) may use the
18 amount for any purpose related to the program de-
19 scribed in subsection (i)(8).”.

20 **SEC. 5. IMPROVING ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR FOSTER**
21 **YOUTH.**

22 Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
23 677) is amended—

24 (1) in subsection (a)(1)—

1 (A) by striking “and preventive” and in-
2 serting “preventive”; and

3 (B) by inserting “, and access to housing
4 for youth age 18 or older” before the semicolon;

5 (2) in subsection (a)(4), by inserting “current
6 and” before “former”;

7 (3) in subsection (b)(2)(D), by inserting “, in-
8 cluding by collaborating with public housing agencies
9 that administer Federal housing programs serving
10 foster youth under section 8(x)(2)(B) of the United
11 States Housing Act of 1937 and receive funding to
12 partner with public child welfare agencies to serve
13 youth who have experienced foster care” before the
14 period;

15 (4) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking “not
16 more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the
17 State from its allotment under subsection (c) for a
18 fiscal year” and inserting “an average of not more
19 than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State
20 from its allotment under subsection (c) for the 5 fis-
21 cal years covered by the application submitted by the
22 State pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection”;

23 (5) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the
24 following:

25 “(6) HOUSING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use
2 amounts from its allotment under subsection (c)
3 to provide supportive services to assist eligible
4 youth who experienced foster care to obtain or
5 retain suitable housing.

6 “(B) DEFINITIONS.—

7 “(i) ELIGIBLE YOUTH.—In this sub-
8 section, the term ‘eligible youth’ means an
9 individual who receives assistance provided
10 under section 8(x) of the United States
11 Housing Act of 1937.

12 “(ii) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—The
13 term ‘supportive services’ may include—

14 “(I) basic life skills information
15 and counseling on financial literacy,
16 use of credit, and money management;

17 “(II) counseling on rental lease
18 contracts and assistance with rental
19 insurance; and

20 “(III) assistance with security
21 deposits, utility connection fees, mov-
22 ing costs, and other fees associated
23 with establishing tenancy.

24 “(C) EXCEPTION.—Expenditures in ac-
25 cordance with this paragraph shall not be con-

1 sidered expenditures for room and board for
2 purposes of subsection (b)(3)(B).

3 “(D) ALIGNING AGE ELIGIBILITY.—Not-
4 withstanding subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii), a State
5 may use funds from its allotment under sub-
6 section (c) to provide supportive services to eli-
7 gible youth who have not attained 26 years of
8 age for the purpose of supporting continued ac-
9 cess to housing.”; and
10 (6) in subsection (g)(1), by inserting “access to
11 housing,” before “and personal”.

12 **SEC. 6. JOINT AGENCY GUIDANCE.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Within 1 year after the date of
14 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and
15 Human Services and the Secretary of Housing and Urban
16 Development, shall develop and issue joint guidance to
17 State public child welfare agencies and public housing au-
18 thorities to improve alignment and coordination of housing
19 supportive services provided under section 477 of the So-
20 cial Security Act and housing assistance provided under
21 section 8(x) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

22 (b) CONTENTS.—The joint guidance shall include the
23 following:

24 (1) Clarification and alignment of Federal poli-
25 cies to improve access to housing for youth who have

1 experienced foster care, including youth who are in
2 independent living arrangements while in extended
3 foster care.

4 (2) Guidance on State use of funds provided
5 under section 477 of the Social Security Act for sup-
6 portive services (as defined in subsection (d)(6) of
7 such section) to improve access to housing programs
8 administered by the Department of Housing and
9 Urban Development.

10 (3) Best practices for building partnerships be-
11 tween public child welfare agencies and public hous-
12 ing authorities, including ways to improve access to
13 supportive services.

14 (4) Additional information the Secretaries deem
15 necessary to effectively coordinate Federal programs
16 serving current and former foster youth.

17 (c) PRODUCTION.—The Secretary of Health and
18 Human Services shall designate an official of the Depart-
19 ment of Health and Human Services to lead development
20 of the joint guidance in collaboration with the Department
21 of Housing and Urban Development.

22 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

23 Within 3 years after the date of the enactment of this
24 Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in con-
25 sultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-

1 opment shall submit to the Committee on Ways and
2 Means and the Committee on Financial Services of the
3 House of Representatives, and the Committee on Finance
4 and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Af-
5 fairs of the Senate a report that sets forth—

6 (1) aggregate data on the number of eligible
7 youth who have experienced foster care who are re-
8 ceiving Federal housing assistance;

9 (2) a description of the outcomes for the youth,
10 including the extent to which youth are able to ac-
11 cess stable housing and rates of homelessness;

12 (3) the findings from any evaluations of State
13 programs conducted pursuant to section 477(g)(1)
14 of the Social Security Act; and

15 (4) statutory recommendations for improving
16 coordination between public child welfare agencies
17 and Federal housing programs.

18 **SEC. 8. LEGAL CONSULTING AND ACCESS UNDER THE**
19 **JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**
20 **FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULT-**
21 **HOOD.**

22 Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
23 677) is amended—

24 (1) in subsection (a)(4), by inserting “legal
25 counseling access,” after “education,”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(3), by adding at the end the following:

“(L) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the relevant case planning and other processes employed by the State take into consideration certain legal issues affecting housing, education, entry into employment, and family connections of current and former foster youth and the efforts required to address the issues, including with respect to State court records, legal recognition of family relationships, and matters relating to custody and permanency.”.

SEC. 9. ENSURING EXPECTANT AND PARENTING YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAM.

(a) PURPOSE.—Section 477(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking “and”;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(8) to connect foster youth in eligible families
 2 (as such term is defined in section 511) who receive
 3 services under this part with evidence-based home
 4 visiting and support services provided under section
 5 511.”.

6 (b) APPLICATIONS.—Section 477(b)(3) of such Act
 7 (42 U.S.C. 677(b)(3)) is amended by adding at the end
 8 the following:

9 “(M) A certification by the chief executive
 10 officer of the State that the State has processes
 11 in place to ensure that a youth participating in
 12 the program under this section who is in an eli-
 13 gible family (as such term is defined in section
 14 511) is provided with information regarding evi-
 15 dence-based home visiting and support services
 16 provided in the State under section 511.”.

17 **SEC. 10. TAILORED CASE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE**
 18 **COORDINATION SERVICES FOR PARENTING**
 19 **AND EXPECTANT YOUTH WHO HAVE EXPERI-**
 20 **ENCED FOSTER CARE.**

21 Section 477(d)(1) of the Social Security Act (42
 22 U.S.C. 677(d)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A State to which an
 24 amount is paid from its allotment under subsection
 25 (c)(1) may use the amount—

“(A) to provide tailored case management and resource coordination services to youth otherwise eligible for services under the State program under this section who are expectant or parenting; or

“(B) in any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of this section.”.

SEC. 11. UPDATING THE PURPOSES OF THE JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD.

(a) UPDATING OF PURPOSES.—Section 477(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677(a)), as amended by section 9(a)(3) of this Act, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (3) through (8) as paragraphs (3) through (9), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after “conducted—” the following:

“(1) to help children who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older to develop and maintain sustained, supportive relationships with adults (including kin or fictive kin who are not serving as placement), mentors, and peers (including peers who

1 have experienced foster care), with a goal of pro-
2 viding multiple and varied paths to reduce isolation
3 and ensuring that the youth develop lifelong connec-
4 tions and support networks;

5 “(2) to support youth still in foster care who
6 have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in
7 exercising the rights referred to in section 475A to
8 participate in developing their permanency plan and
9 receive written information about available services
10 and steps the agency is taking to support the plan,
11 as well as to facilitate pre- and post-permanency
12 peer support, mentoring, connections with kin, and
13 referrals to additional appropriate programs and
14 services to help youth achieve their permanency
15 goals;”.

16 (b) GUIDANCE.—Within 1 year after the date of the
17 enactment of this Act and after consulting with youth with
18 lived experience in foster care, the Secretary of Health and
19 Human Services shall issue guidance to States and Tribal
20 child welfare agencies regarding the purposes set forth in
21 paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 477(a) of the Social Se-
22 curity Act, that includes, at a minimum—

23 (1) examples of services and support eligible for
24 Federal funding under part B of title IV of such
25 Act, under part E of such title as part of completing

1 and following the case plan requirements provided
2 for in section 475A of such Act, or under section
3 477 of such Act, including individual youth support,
4 family support, and peer support to engage youth
5 during reunification, guardianship, or adoption pro-
6 ceedings;

7 (2) best practices for facilitating peer support,
8 mentoring, and the development and maintenance of
9 lifelong connections, including practices that support
10 sibling, tribal, and community connections, including
11 minimum qualifications and training for persons
12 providing mentoring and peer support;

13 (3) standards of outreach to and notification of
14 eligible youth, including youth with a planned per-
15 manent living arrangement, to ensure referrals to
16 appropriate programs and services; and

17 (4) protocols for documentation of support and
18 relationship-building activities under section 477 of
19 such Act that are required by section 475A of such
20 Act to be included in a child's case plan, sufficient
21 to permit review under the case review system de-
22 scribed in section 475(5) of such Act.

23 **SEC. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in
25 this Act, this Act and the amendments made by this Act

1 shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act.

3 (b) DELAYED PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION
4 REQUIRED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
5 ices determines that State legislation (other than legisla-
6 tion appropriating funds) is required in order for a State
7 plan under section 477 of the Social Security Act to meet
8 the additional requirements imposed by the amendments
9 made by sections 5(3), 5(4), 8(2), and 9(b) of this Act,
10 the plan shall not be regarded as failing to meet any of
11 the additional requirements before the 1st day of the 1st
12 calendar quarter beginning after the first regular session
13 of the State legislature that begins after the date of the
14 enactment of this Act. For purposes of the preceding sen-
15 tence, if the State has a 2-year legislative session, each
16 year of the session is deemed to be a separate regular ses-
17 sion of the State legislature.

Passed the House of Representatives May 19, 2026.

Attest:

Clerk.

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AN ACT

To modernize section 477 of part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve connections to housing, expand education and training opportunities, and modernize services to improve outcomes for foster youth transitioning into adulthood.