

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7529

To require States to consider legal issues affecting youth as part of case planning and to provide States with the option to use funds from the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to support access to legal services and counseling.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. LAHOOD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To require States to consider legal issues affecting youth as part of case planning and to provide States with the option to use funds from the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to support access to legal services and counseling.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fresh Starts for Fos-
5 ter Youth Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. LEGAL CONSULTING AND ACCESS UNDER THE**
2 **JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**
3 **FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULT-**
4 **HOOD.**

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

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

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

11 “(L) A certification by the chief executive
12 officer of the State that the relevant case plan-
13 ning and other processes employed by the State
14 take into consideration the effect of certain
15 legal issues affecting housing, education, entry
16 into employment, and family connections of cur-
17 rent and former foster youth and the efforts re-
18 quired to address the issues, including with re-
19 spect to State court records, legal recognition of
20 family relationships, and matters relating to
21 custody and permanency.”.

22 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this
24 Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the
25 date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to pay-
26 ments under section 477 of the Social Security Act pursu-

1 ant to plans approved by the Secretary of Health and
2 Human Services on or after such date.

3 (b) DELAY PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION RE-
4 QUIRED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services
5 determines that State legislation (other than legislation
6 appropriating funds) is required in order for a State plan
7 developed pursuant to section 477 of the Social Security
8 Act to meet the additional requirements imposed by the
9 amendments made by this Act, the plan shall not be re-
10 garded as failing to meet any of the additional require-
11 ments before the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter be-
12 ginning after the first regular session of the State legisla-
13 ture that begins after the date of the enactment of this
14 Act. For purposes of the preceding sentence, if the State
15 has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session
16 is deemed to be a separate regular session of the State
17 legislature.

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