

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7995

To update the purposes of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to reflect research and the input of youth with lived experience about the importance of long-term relationships to future success.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 19, 2026

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself and Mr. CAREY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To update the purposes of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to reflect research and the input of youth with lived experience about the importance of long-term relationships to future success.

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 “Chafee Opportunities
5 for New Networks and Existing Connection Trust Act”
6 or the “CONNECT Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. UPDATING THE PURPOSES OF THE JOHN H.**
2 **CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUC-**
3 **CESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD.**

4 (a) UPDATING OF PURPOSES.—

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

7 (A) by striking paragraph (2);

8 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and
9 (3) through (7) as paragraphs (3) through (8),
10 respectively; and

11 (C) by inserting after “conducted—” the
12 following:

13 “(1) to help children who have experienced fos-
14 ter care at age 14 or older to develop and maintain
15 sustained, supportive relationships with adults (in-
16 cluding kin or fictive kin who are not serving as
17 placement), mentors, and peers (including peers who
18 have experienced foster care), with a goal of pro-
19 viding multiple and varied paths to reduce isolation
20 and ensuring that the youth develop lifelong connec-
21 tions and support networks;

22 “(2) to support youth still in foster care who
23 have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in
24 exercising the rights referred to in section 475A to
25 participate in developing their permanency plan and
26 receive written information about available services

1 and steps the agency is taking to support the plan,
2 as well as to facilitate pre- and post-permanency
3 peer support, mentoring, connections with kin, and
4 referrals to additional appropriate programs and
5 services to help youth achieve their permanency
6 goals;”.

7 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
8 by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date that
9 is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

10 (b) GUIDANCE.—Within 1 year after the date of the
11 enactment of this Act and after consulting with youth with
12 lived experience in foster care, the Secretary of Health and
13 Human Services shall issue guidance to States and Tribal
14 child welfare agencies, regarding the purposes set forth
15 in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 477(a) of the Social
16 Security Act, that includes, at a minimum—

17 (1) examples of services and support eligible for
18 Federal funding under part B of title IV of such
19 Act, under part E of such title as part of completing
20 and following the case plan requirements provided
21 for in section 475A of such Act, or under section
22 477 of such Act, including individual youth support,
23 family support, and peer support to engage youth
24 during reunification, guardianship, or adoption pro-
25 ceedings;

1 (2) best practices for facilitating peer support,
2 mentoring, and the development and maintenance of
3 lifelong connections, including practices that support
4 sibling, tribal, and community connections, including
5 minimum qualifications and training for persons
6 providing mentoring and peer support;

7 (3) standards of outreach to and notification of
8 eligible youth, including youth with a planned per-
9 manent living arrangement, to ensure referrals to
10 appropriate programs and services; and

11 (4) protocols for documentation of support and
12 relationship-building activities under section 477 of
13 such Act that are required by section 475A of such
14 Act to be included in a child's case plan, sufficient
15 to permit review under the case review system de-
16 scribed in section 475(5) of such Act.

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