



Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Help Young People from Foster Care Endure Effects of COVID-19 Crisis: the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act

Aug 7, 2020

Washington, DC - A ray of hope for foster youth emerged today when, in a bipartisan effort, Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL) and Ranking Member Jackie Walorski (R-IN) of the Worker and Family Support Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee came together to introduce a bill that would help young people who have aged out of foster care without families weather the economic effects of the COVID-19.

“This pandemic has hit young people from foster care hard in terms of loss of jobs, housing and even school,” said Celeste Bodner, Executive Director, FosterClub. “This bill would go a long way to helping young people recover from the aftermath of COVID-19 and get back on track with their lives.”

The bipartisan legislation was introduced with support from Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) and Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-TX) of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The [Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act](#) provides critical supports to older youth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and moves forward emergency assistance to children, youth, and families in the child welfare system facing unprecedented stress and disruptions. The bill also increases support to help keep families together and ensures more children in foster care have placement stability. As an immediate, targeted response to the COVID-19 emergency, this bill provides additional temporary supports and flexibilities for older foster youth, grandparents and other kinship families, home visiting for pregnant and parenting families, and other child welfare services through the end of FY 2021.

Why it's important:

Since the COVID-19 crisis hit the United States, FosterClub has been [hearing from older youth in foster care across the country about their urgent needs](#) during the pandemic.

A young person from Illinois shared that, “Next month I’m not really going to be able to afford much food and I don’t know how/where to apply for SNAP.”

In Indiana, a young person wrote he was “Trying to find a job to pay for my bills, I have no financial help at all, while taking online classes.”

In Massachusetts, a college student and young person from foster care wrote us about his concerns to try to pay the bills: “(I) was working a paid internship. No longer can work to generate income. Receive housing voucher but utilities add up.”

And, in Texas, a young parent who was formerly in foster care shared that her situation was growing dire: “I have no support system and no financial resources, I was laid off due to the coronavirus and unable to work and provide for my kids.”

If this bill is included in the COVID relief package being developed currently, these measures would reduce homelessness, hunger and improve supports for young adults from foster care who are largely on their own.

In addition, FosterClub wants to acknowledge that several congressional champions on both sides of the aisle who have elevated older youth voices throughout the pandemic and responded to their urgent needs through legislation, specifically:

- [H. R. 6848](#), Pandemic Protection for Transition Aged Youth Act, introduced by Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA), Rep. Bacon (R-NE), Rep. Langevin (D-RI), Mrs. Lawrence (D-MI), and Mr. Mitchell (R-MI).
- [H.R.6766](#) – A bill to temporarily modify the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for other purposes, introduced by Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI)
- [H.R. 6800](#), The Heroes Act, introduced by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
- The Child Welfare Emergency Assistance Act, introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Bob Casey (D-PA) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). [See here](#) for a bill summary.
- The American Workers, Families, and Employers Assistance Act (S. 4318) by Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) as part of the Health; Economic Assistance; Liability protection; and Schools the “HEALS ACT on July 27, 2020.

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