

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 7432, with Amendments

(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a new text and a new title)

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7432

To amend section 477 of the Social Security Act to improve coordination with Federal housing assistance programs for youth who have experienced foster care.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 9, 2026

Mr. LAHOOD (for himself and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend section 477 of the Social Security Act to improve coordination with Federal housing assistance programs for youth who have experienced foster care.

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 “Fostering the Future
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**
2 **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WHO**
3 **HAVE EXPERIENCED FOSTER CARE.**

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

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

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

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

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

22 (5) in subsection (i)(4)—

23 (A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read
24 as follows:

25 “(A) may be available for the cost of at-
26 tendance—

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

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

13 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as
14 subparagraph (C); and

15 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (A),
16 as so amended, the following:

17 “(B) may be available for costs—

18 “(i) associated with participation in
19 an apprenticeship program;

20 “(ii) to obtain a general equivalency
21 degree; or

22 “(iii) to receive remedial education;
23 and”;

24 (6) in subsection (i), by adding at the end the
25 following:

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

6 “(A) not already available through the
7 school district of the student or another free
8 local, State, or Federal program; and

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

12 **SEC. 3. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
13 **VOUCHER AMOUNT AND PROVISION OF**
14 **GREATER SUPPORT FOR FOSTER YOUTH**
15 **PURSUING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**

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

18 (1) in paragraph (3)—

19 (A) by striking “that program” and insert-
20 ing “that education or training program, (ex-
21 cept that the State may establish a grace period
22 to allow a youth to continue participation in ac-
23 tivities described in paragraph (4)(A), after an
24 assessment and consultation with the youth, if

1 the State determines that reasonable cir-
2 cumstances warrant the grace period”); and

3 (B) by striking “the program” and insert-
4 ing “the voucher program”; and

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

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

15 **SEC. 4. IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND YOUTH AWARE-**
16 **NESS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCH-**
17 **ERS.**

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

21 “(8) The State shall make reasonable efforts to
22 ensure that eligible youth are aware of potential ben-
23 efits provided under this subsection, including by co-
24 ordinating with programs funded under subsection
25 (h)(1).

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

6 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Section 477(d)(1) of such Act
7 (42 U.S.C. 677(d)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

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

17 **SEC. 5. IMPROVING ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR FOSTER**
18 **YOUTH.**

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

21 (1) in subsection (a)(1)—

22 (A) by striking “and preventive” and in-
23 serting “preventive”; and

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

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

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

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

19 (5) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the
20 following:

21 “(6) HOUSING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use
23 amounts from its allotment under subsection (c)
24 to provide supportive services to assist eligible

1 youth who experienced foster care to obtain or
2 retain suitable housing.

3 “(B) DEFINITIONS.—

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

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

11 “(I) basic life skills information
12 and counseling on financial literacy,
13 use of credit, and money management;

14 “(II) counseling on rental lease
15 contracts and assistance with rental
16 insurance; and

17 “(III) assistance with security
18 deposits, utility connection fees, mov-
19 ing costs, and other fees associated
20 with establishing tenancy.

21 “(C) EXCEPTION.—Expenditures in ac-
22 cordance with this paragraph shall not be con-
23 sidered expenditures for room and board for
24 purposes of subsection (b)(3)(B).

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

10 **SEC. 6. JOINT AGENCY GUIDANCE.**

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

20 (b) CONTENTS.—The joint guidance shall include the
21 following:

22 (1) Clarification and alignment of Federal poli-
23 cies to improve access to housing for youth who have
24 experienced foster care, including youth who are in

1 independent living arrangements while in extended
2 foster care.

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

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

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

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

21 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

22 Within 3 years after the date of the enactment of this
23 Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in con-
24 sultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
25 opment shall submit to the Committee on Ways and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 “(L) A certification by the chief executive
4 officer of the State that the relevant case plan-
5 ning and other processes employed by the State
6 take into consideration certain legal issues af-
7 fecting housing, education, entry into employ-
8 ment, and family connections of current and
9 former foster youth and the efforts required to
10 address the issues, including with respect to
11 State court records, legal recognition of family
12 relationships, and matters relating to custody
13 and permanency.”.

14 **SEC. 9. ENSURING EXPECTANT AND PARENTING YOUTH**
15 **HAVE ACCESS TO SERVICES PROVIDED**
16 **THROUGH THE MATERNAL, INFANT, AND**
17 **EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PRO-**
18 **GRAM.**

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

- 21 (1) in paragraph (6), by striking “and”;
- 22 (2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period and
23 inserting “; and”; and
- 24 (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—

1 “(A) to provide tailored case management
2 and resource coordination services to youth oth-
3 erwise eligible for services under the State pro-
4 gram under this section who are expectant or
5 parenting; or

6 “(B) in any manner that is reasonably cal-
7 culated to accomplish the purposes of this sec-
8 tion.”.

9 **SEC. 11. UPDATING THE PURPOSES OF THE JOHN H.**
10 **CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUC-**
11 **CESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD.**

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

15 (1) by striking paragraph (2);

16 (2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (3)
17 through (8) as paragraphs (3) through (9), respec-
18 tively; and

19 (3) by inserting after “conducted—” the fol-
20 lowing:

21 “(1) to help children who have experienced fos-
22 ter care at age 14 or older to develop and maintain
23 sustained, supportive relationships with adults (in-
24 cluding kin or fictive kin who are not serving as
25 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.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill 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.”.