



**H.R. 7947, the *Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act*  
Chairman Danny K. Davis and Ranking Member Jackie Walorski  
Section-by-Section Summary**

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.

**SECTION 1: SHORT TITLE**

- Provides the title of the bill, *Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act*

**SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS**

- Defines the COVID Public Health Emergency period for policies and funding with this bill to begin April 1, 2020 and end September 30, 2021.

**SEC. 3. CONTINUED SAFE OPERATION OF CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT FOR OLDER FOSTER YOUTH.**

- Provides an additional \$350 million for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee), and \$50 million for the John H. Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program for Youths Aging out of Foster Care (Chafee ETV) without additional appropriations action, and waives the state match requirement for these additional funds.
- Increases the maximum Chafee ETV award amount from \$5,000 up to \$12,000 per youth per year for training and postsecondary education for eligible foster youth, exempts National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) penalty assessments from these additional funds, and raises the maximum age through 26 for Chafee-eligible former foster youth.
- Temporarily provides necessary programmatic flexibilities for older youth in foster care:
  - Suspends certain training and postsecondary education requirements,
  - Clarifies that under these provisions the Chafee ETV vouchers may be used to maintain training and postsecondary education costs,
  - Lifts the 30 percent spending cap on housing costs.

**SEC. 4. PREVENTING AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE DURING THE PANDEMIC**

- Provides older foster youth with assurance that they may continue to receive foster care supports and services during the pandemic.
  - Requires states to provide youth who would otherwise “age out” of foster care during the public health emergency period with the option of remaining in care.
  - For youth who already “aged out” of foster care during the pandemic, requires states to permit youth to voluntarily re-enter care, and requires states to notify them of the option in several ways.

- Lifts certain educational and work requirements associated with remaining in extended foster care.
- Ensures protections for youth in foster care, including continued services to ensure the safety and well-being of youth, and transition plans.
- Permits states to use new Chafee funds to offset the cost of meeting requirements in this section for youth who are ineligible for Title IV-E foster care. In cases where youth are eligible for Title IV-E foster care funds, federal match of administrative and maintenance costs remains available.

**SEC. 5. FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES PROGRAM PANDEMIC FLEXIBILITY.**

- Waives the state match requirement for services related to evidence-based mental health, substance abuse, and parenting skills to keep children safe and out of foster care authorized in the *Family First Prevention Services Act*. The match is waived through September 30, 2021.

**SEC. 6 EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR THE MARYLEE ALLEN PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM.**

- Provides an additional \$85 million for the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, subject to the reservation described in Section 7, and waives the state match requirement for these additional funds.

**SEC. 7. COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.**

- Reserves \$10 million of the funds provided in Section 6 for the federal Court Improvement Program (CIP), of which \$500,000 is reserved for Tribal CIP programs.
- Caps maximum grant awards at \$85,000, follows regular CIP distribution rules, and does not require a match or new application.
- Specifies allowable uses of funds, including: technology for remote hearings; training for judges, legal, and social work staff; and programs for families to comply with case plans.

**SEC. 8. ALLOWING HOME VISITING PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE SERVING FAMILIES SAFELY.**

- Temporarily allows necessary program flexibilities to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including: virtual home visits; sustained funding for staffing regardless of enrollment; expenditures for training, acquisition of technology for virtual home visits, and providing emergency supplies to families.
- Temporarily provides the HHS Secretary with authority to delay certain deadlines that may be impacted by the pandemic, including performance measure data reporting and statewide needs assessments.
- Extends the grant obligation period through September 30, 2021 to ensure that appropriated funds can be spent to assist families and do not revert back to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

**SEC. 9. KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAMS PANDEMIC FLEXIBILITY.**

- Temporarily waives the required state match to draw down federal funding for kinship navigator programs, which help connect grandparents and other kin caregivers with needed services, and waives the match applicability to US Territory caps.
- Temporarily waives the evidence requirement to allow states to use federal funds for Kinship Navigator programs which are not yet in the Prevention Services Clearinghouse. Preserves access to funding to continue evaluation of such programs.
- Specifies allowable use of funds, including evaluation activities and ensuring kinship families have the supports necessary to remain safe and healthy during the pandemic.

**SEC. 10. ADJUSTMENT OF FUNDING CERTAINTY BASELINES FOR FAMILY FIRST TRANSITION ACT FUNDING CERTAINTY GRANTS.**

- Makes a technical correction to Title IV-E treatment of the 6.2% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate increase from the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* such that it applies to the baseline based on annual average FMAP rate in the state for FY2020 and FY2021, to ensure access to Funding Certainty Grants.

**SEC. 11. TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO TEMPORARY INCREASE OF MEDICAID FMAP.**

- Makes a technical correction to apply the 6.2% FMAP rate increase to the District of Columbia's foster care program in the same way it applies to states.