

## Frequently Asked Questions

### H.R. 6307 & Expanding Federal Funding for Youth in Foster Care to Age 21

#### ***What bill was recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives regarding extending federal funding for youth in foster care to age 21?***

On June 24, 2008 the *Fostering Connections to Success Act* (H.R. 6307) passed in the United States House of Representatives. This bipartisan bill was sponsored by Representatives Jim McDermott (D-WA) and Jerry Weller (R-IL). It is an abridged version of an earlier bill introduced by Representative Jim McDermott in February 2008, the *Invest in Kids Act* (H.R. 5466).

#### ***Is there evidence that extending foster care until age 21 improves outcomes for youth?***

Yes. The most definitive study is the *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth* by Professor Mark Courtney. Comparing outcomes in three states over five years, the *Midwest Study* found that there were improved outcomes in the areas of education, physical and mental health and criminal justice among youth who remained in foster care past age 18. For more findings from the *Midwest Study*, click [here](#).

#### ***When would the policy take effect and would all states extend foster care to age 21?***

The extension of federal foster care funding to age 21 would take effect October 1, 2010. Other provisions in the bill would be implemented at different times. H.R. 6307 is state option, not a requirement.

#### ***Does the bill include conditions for youth to continue receiving foster care and if so, what are they?***

Yes. To remain eligible for foster care a youth would need to be (1) completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential, (2) enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education (3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment or (4) employed for at least 80 hours per month.

#### ***Does the bill change the kind of placements allowable for 18 to 21 year-olds in foster care?***

Yes. H.R. 6307 redefines a child-care institution to include, "a supervised setting in which the individual is living independently, in accordance with such conditions as the Secretary shall establish in regulations."

#### ***Would H.R. 6307 require youth to remain in foster care until age 21?***

No. Each youth would elect whether he or she would like to remain in foster care after age 18.

#### ***Are there states that already allow youth to remain in foster care to age 21?***

Yes, there are states that extend foster care to age 21, in a variety of different ways, commonly using state-only funds or a portion of the Independent Living Skills allocation. These include NY, IL and AZ among others.

#### ***What is the next step in the policy making process?***

A House-passed bill may be placed directly on the Senate Calendar, bypassing the subcommittee and committee reviews. More likely, however, the subcommittees and committees in the Senate will hold hearings, and possibly amend the bill. The topic of extending federal funding for foster care to age 21 is already under consideration in the Senate, with S. 1512, sponsored by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA). This bill, the *Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act*, was introduced in May 2007 and has 18 co-sponsors.

#### ***What else would H.R. 6307 accomplish, in addition to extending federal funding to age 21?***

H.R.6307 addresses many important issues. These include expanding supports for relative care providers, expanding training funds, improving oversight of health care, promoting educational stability, increasing aid for tribal foster care, encouraging sibling placement, extending and improving adoption incentives and promoting the adoption tax credit. Click [here](#) for the full text of the bill. Extending funding to age 21 is in Section 5.

#### ***How can I help?***

Contact your U.S. Senator to urge their support of H.R. 6307. A sample letter of support will be developed and circulated by July 15, 2008. For more information, please contact Amy Lemley, Policy Director of the John Burton Foundation at 415-693-1322 or [amy@johnburtonfoundation.org](mailto:amy@johnburtonfoundation.org)