

Child Welfare Bills Endorsed by Voice for Adoption

110th Congress

Voice for Adoption (VFA) is a membership advocacy organization. We speak out for the 115,000 children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted. VFA members recruit families to adopt special needs children and youth. Our members also provide vital support services both before and after adoption finalization to help adoptive families through the challenges they often face. We are dedicated to finding permanent, loving families for every waiting child in foster care. We are also concerned about those youth in foster care who do not find permanent families but instead age out without family connections.

VFA has endorsed the following bills for the improvements they seek to make in the child welfare system. VFA encourages members of Congress to support these bills, including signing on as co-sponsors. VFA is available to Congressional offices if you would like to learn more about these bills. You can reach Alicia Groh, VFA's Executive Director, at voiceforadoption@gmail.com or 202-210-8118.

<i>Bill Name</i>	<i>Bill Number</i>	<i>Primary Sponsor(s)</i>	<i>Purpose / Summary</i>
Adoption Equality Act	S 1462 / HR 4091	Sen. John D. Rockefeller, IV (D-WV) / Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN)	<p>Amends Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to revise requirements for children with special needs in the adoption assistance program. Requires that the child be in the care of a public or licensed private child placement agency or Indian tribal organization pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement, relinquishment, or involuntary removal of the child from the home, where the state has determined that continuation in the home would be contrary to the child's safety or welfare. Specifies related requirements.</p> <p>Prohibits adoption assistance to parents with respect to a child who is not a U.S. citizen or resident, and who was adopted outside of the United States or brought into the United States for the purposes of being adopted.</p>

Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act	S 1512	Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA)	Amends Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to give states the option for youth to elect to remain in foster care after attaining age 18 until attaining age 19, 20, or 21.
Foster Care Mentoring Act of 2007	S 379	Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	<p>Amends Title IV-B (Child-Welfare Services) of the Social Security Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to states to support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using networks of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care. Authorizes a grant award directly to a political subdivision if the subdivision serves a substantial number of foster care youth.</p> <p>Prescribes program implementation guidelines, including: (1) application requirements; (2) training; (3) screening; (4) educational requirements; (5) federal and nonfederal share of funds for the program; (6) considerations in awarding grants; and (7) use of funds.</p> <p>Sets forth a maximum grant amount to be awarded to a state or political subdivision.</p> <p>Authorizes the Secretary to award a competitive grant to an eligible entity to establish a National Hotline Service or website to provide information to individuals interested in becoming mentors to youth in foster care.</p> <p>Instructs the Secretary of Education to implement a program to provide for the discharge or cancellation of the federal student loan indebtedness of an eligible mentor.</p>

<p>Kinship Caregiver Support Act of 2007</p>	<p>S 661 / HR 2188</p>	<p>Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) / Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-IL) and Rep. Timothy Johnson (R-IL)</p>	<p>Authorizes the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services to make grants for kinship navigator programs to state agencies, metropolitan agencies, or tribal organizations with experience in addressing needs of kinship caregivers or children and connecting them with services and assistance.</p> <p>Amends Title IV-E (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of the Social Security Act to authorize all states to opt to enter agreements to provide kinship guardianship assistance payments on behalf of children to grandparents and other relatives who have assumed legal guardianship of children for whom they have cared as foster parents and have committed to care for on a permanent basis. Allows states to use part E funds to make such payments under specified conditions.</p> <p>Provides that adoptive parents of children with special needs remain eligible for adoption assistance, even if they receive kinship guardianship assistance.</p> <p>Authorizes the use of foster care independence program funds to provide independent living services and education and training vouchers for children who exit foster care to kinship guardianship or adoption after age 16.</p> <p>Authorizes kinship guardianship demonstration projects.</p> <p>Requires states to: (1) notify all adult grandparents and other adult relatives (with exceptions due to family or domestic violence) when a child is removed from custody of a parent or parents; and (2) explain the options the relative has to participate in the child's care and placement.</p>
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Medicaid Foster Care Coverage Act of 2007	HR 1376	Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)	Amends Title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act to establish independent foster care adolescents as a mandatory category of individuals for coverage under state Medicaid programs.
To amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to increase payments to States for expenditures for short term training of staff of certain child welfare agencies.	HR 2314	Rep. Jerry Weller (R-IL)	Amends Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of the Social Security Act to increase payments to states for expenditures for short-term training of staff of certain child welfare agencies.
Tribal Foster Care and Adoption Act of 2007	S 1956 / HR 4688	Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) / Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND)	Amends Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to provide equitable access for foster care and adoption services for Indian children in tribal areas.
White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010 Act	HR 5461/ S 2771	Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA) / Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	To require the President to call a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010.