



Child Welfare Legislation in Congress: 112th Congress (Jan. 2011-Jan. 2013)

<i>Bill Name</i>	<i>Bill Number</i>	<i>Primary Sponsor(s)</i>	<i>Purpose / Summary</i>	<i>VFA Position*</i>
Foster Care Mentoring Act of 2011	S. 420 H.R. 2012	Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA)	A bill that would establish \$15 million in grants to states to support public and private community entities to provide mentoring programs for children in foster care. The bill would authorize funding for a national hotline service or website to host and provide information to individuals who are interested in serving as mentors and would authorize \$4 million toward a national public awareness and recruitment campaign. The bill would also require the Secretary of Education to implement a program to establish federal student loan forgiveness to volunteers mentoring foster youth. Mentors would be able to receive up to \$2,000 in student loan forgiveness for every 200 volunteer hours, up to a total of \$10,000.	
To renew the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to approve demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies in State child welfare programs	H.R. 1194	Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) Rep. Geoff Davis (R-KY)	Renews the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to approve demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies in state child welfare programs.	
Tax Relief Guarantee Act of 2011	H.R. 1184	Rep. Joe Wilson	A bill to prohibit the sunset (expiration date) of the adoption tax credit enacted by the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation (EGTRR) Act of 2001.	

Tax Relief Guarantee Act	S. 82	Sen. Mike Johanns (R-NE)	A bill to repeal the sunset of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation (EGTRR) Act of 2001 with respect to the expansion of the adoption credit and adoption assistance programs, to repeal the sunset of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act with respect to increased dollar limitations for such credit and programs. Allows the adoption credit to be claimed in the year expenses are paid or incurred, regardless of when the adoption becomes final.	
Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2011	S. 596	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)	Requires child welfare agencies to promptly report missing and abducted children to law enforcement and requires law authorities to notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Requires changes to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) so that a child entered into the database will be automatically designated as an endangered juvenile if the child has been reported missing not less than 3 times in a 1-year period. Amends title IV of the Social Security Act (Grants to States for Needy Families with Children and for Child-Welfare Services) to require states to adopt procedures for reporting information on missing or abducted children for entry into the NCIC database. Establishes sex trafficking block grants to be administered by the Office of Justice Programs within the Dept. of Justice for \$2 million per year, with total authorization being \$45 million over three years. Various funded activities would include outreach, education and deterrence prevention efforts, among others.	
Every Child Deserves a Family Act	H.R. 1681	Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)	A bill that would open more homes for foster youth by restricting federal funding for states employing discriminatory practices in adoption and foster care placements based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the foster youth involved.	Endorsed



Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act	S. 961	Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)	This legislation is intended to reduce youth homelessness and would improve training, educational opportunities and permanency planning for older foster youth. The bill would extend the age for children in the nation to remain in foster care until at least 21. It would mandate that children in foster care receive Social Security benefits that they are qualified to receive due to their parent's disability or death.	Endorsed
State Child Welfare Innovation Act of 2011	S. 1013	Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) Sen. Michael Enzi (R-WY) Sen. John Rockefeller (D-WV)	The legislation allows States to apply for a competitive grant through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in order to receive a waiver for existing title IV-E federal foster care funds. The waivers would allow flexibility to States in spending federal dollars to fund innovative strategies to serve children in foster care. This legislation builds on existing child welfare demonstration projects that have been used in the past. The Senate bill would expand the use of waivers and set new goals for States to enact procedures to ensure the best outcomes for children in foster care.	
To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the recruitment and retention of foster parents in the United States	H.R. 2022	Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA)	A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a study on the recruitment and retention of foster parents in the United States. The bill would require the HHS to conduct a study on foster parent recruitment and retention and would require a report of findings and recommendations on children served by foster care programs under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. It would include a survey of foster parents; an evaluation of respite care; and identification of present barriers that limit States to recruit and retain foster care families and relative caregivers.	



Dave Thomas Adoption Act of 2011	H.R. 1576	Rep. Peter King (R-NY)	Amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow penalty-free withdrawals from individual retirement plans if used to pay adoption expenses, including an enhanced allowance for expenses related to the adoption of a special needs child.	
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*Voice for Adoption takes a position on some of the bills in Congress. For the bills where no position is listed, VFA has not yet taken a position, but may do so in the future.

Note: Full text and the status of all legislation that has been introduced in Congress can be found online at www.congress.gov

