112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  

S. 961

To create the income security conditions and family supports needed to ensure permanency for the Nation’s unaccompanied youth, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES  
MAY 12, 2011  

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. BEGICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL  
To create the income security conditions and family supports needed to ensure permanency for the Nation’s unaccompanied youth, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; ETC.  
(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act of 2011”.

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TITLE I—PREVENTION OF UNACCOMPANIED SITUATIONS AMONG CHILD WELFARE GROUPS

SEC. 101. CURTAILMENT OF INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES.

Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (26);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (27) and inserting “; and”;

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(28) provides that the State shall have in effect such laws and procedures as are necessary to ensure that—

“(A) a child may not be placed in foster care under the responsibility of the State solely because the family with which the child is living is homeless (as defined in paragraph (2) of section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)) or living in substandard housing (as defined in section 204(b)(11) of the National Housing Act) or a dwelling unit that is experiencing severe phys-
ical problems (as defined in subparagraph (F) of such section); and

“(B) the State will work with the family and State housing authorities to secure permanent housing for any family that includes a minor child and is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.”.

SEC. 102. GAO REPORT ON UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH ACCESS TO THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the policies and practices of States regarding access to child welfare services (including services related to foster care and adoption) that are financed pursuant to part B or E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) by children who have attained 13 years of age and that considers the use of runaway and homeless situations, as well as status as domestic minor victims of sex trafficking, as risk assessment factors for determining the appropriateness of placement in the child welfare system. Such report shall include—

(1) an inventory of such policies and practices;
(2) an assessment of the effectiveness of such policies and practices; and

(3) recommendations for such Federal or State legislation or administrative action as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

SEC. 103. DISCHARGE FROM CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

(a) State Plans Required To Describe State Policies and Procedures Regarding Runaway or Missing Foster Children.—Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)), as amended by section 101, is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (27);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (28) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(29) describes the written policies and procedures of the State that are designed to reduce the incidence of children missing or running away from foster care, and to locate and return such children to foster placements.”.

(b) Judicial Review of Permanency Plan for Child Leaving Foster Care.—Section 475(5)(C) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5)(C)) is amended—
(1) by striking “and (iii)” and inserting “(iii)”; and

(2) by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: “; and (iv) procedural safeguards shall be applied to assure that the final permanency hearing regarding the transition of the child from foster care to a planned, permanent living arrangement or independent living is held in a family or juvenile court or another court (including a tribal court) of competent jurisdiction;”.

(c) Review of Steps Taken To Ensure Appropriate Housing for Children Leaving Foster Care.—Section 475(5)(C)(iii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5)(C)(iii)) is amended by inserting “, and reviews all documentation of the efforts to secure a permanent living arrangement for the child upon emancipation from foster care” before “; and”.

(d) Modification of Case Plan Requirements.—Section 475(1)(D) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(1)(D)) is amended to read as follows:

“(D) Where appropriate, for a child who has attained 14 years of age (and, at State option, any other child), a written description of the programs and services that will facilitate the transition of the child from foster care to
independent living, including age-appropriate adolescent health services, which include services to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, as part of a general health plan, and a discussion of the appropriateness of the services that have been provided to the child under the plan. The plan for such child shall also include documentation of the steps the agency is taking to ensure a permanent placement with a family or other adult connection for the child, and a permanent living arrangement. In the case of a child who has attained 17 years of age or with a permanency goal of emancipation, the plan shall include documentation of the child’s permanent living arrangement upon emancipation.”.

SEC. 104. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR IMPROVING PERMANENCY FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE.

(a) Establishment.—The Secretary shall establish a demonstration project to develop multi-State working groups to conduct research and develop policy recommendations for the support and enhancement of long-term permanency planning for children in foster care.

(b) Duration and Scope.—
(1) **Duration.**—The Secretary shall conduct the demonstration project for a period of 5 years.

(2) **Scope.**—The Secretary shall designate not more than 5 working groups to participate in the demonstration project, with each working group to be established by and operated between 2 or more States.

(c) **Application.**—A group of 2 or more States that desires to participate in the demonstration project shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(d) **Recommendations.**—The recommendations developed by a working group participating in the demonstration project shall include consideration of methods for improvement and enhancement in the following areas:

(1) The home study process for screening of prospective foster care parents, guardians, and adoptive parents, including the development of a standardized home study process.

(2) Visitation policies for children in foster care and their biological parents.

(3) Standardization of temporary or provisional licensing for foster care parents.
(4) Streamlining the application process for prospective foster care parents and reducing the length of time required for approval through the application process.

(5) Coordination of administrative processes, including the development of a standard data exchange to allow for greater efficiency in the transfer of relevant data, information, and paperwork between States, foster care agencies, and other relevant State agencies.

(6) Any other areas determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(e) Authorization of Appropriations.—For the period of fiscal years 2012 through 2016, there is authorized to be appropriated a total of $50,000,000 to the Secretary to carry out the demonstration project under this section.

(f) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) Demonstration Project.—The term “demonstration project” means the demonstration project conducted under this section.

(2) Secretary.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(3) State.—The term “State” means any of the 50 States or the District of Columbia.
SEC. 105. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN GOOD NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR PROGRAM FOR FOSTER CARE ALUMNI.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall revise subpart F of part 291 of its regulations (24 C.F.R. 291) to provide that individuals who have been under the responsibility of the State foster care system but are no longer under the responsibility of the State due to having attained the age of majority, and who have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher from an institution of higher education in the United States, qualify to purchase a home through the Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program.

SEC. 106. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR IMPROVING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND REDUCING HOMELESSNESS FOR LGBT YOUTH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall establish a demonstration project to develop programs that are focused on improving family relationships and reducing homelessness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, including—

(1) research-based behavioral interventions that are designed to decrease rejecting behaviors and increase supportive behaviors in families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth in order to en-
sure that such youth maintain residence in their homes;

(2) research-based assessment tools to help identify lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth that are at risk for family conflict or ejection from their homes;

(3) research-based family educational tools and resources to help families learn about—

(A) behaviors that may place lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth at risk; and

(B) alternative behaviors that promote positive development for such youth; and

(4) multimedia educational tools and resources that are—

(A) based on research regarding supportive and rejecting behaviors in families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth; and

(B) focused on helping a diverse range of families understand how their words, actions, and behaviors affect the survival and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

(b) **Duration.**—The Secretary shall conduct the demonstration project for a period of 5 years.
(c) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for purposes of carrying out the demonstration project under this section.

TITLE II—EXTENSION OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES TO OLDER YOUTH

SEC. 201. ELIGIBILITY FOR FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS, ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS, AND KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE THROUGH AGE 20.

(a) Definition of Child.—Effective as if included in the enactment of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), section 475(8) of the Social Security Act (as added by section 201(a) of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008) is amended to read as follows:

“(8) The term ‘child’ means—

“(A) a minor child; and

“(B) an individual who has reached the legal age of majority but has not attained 21 years of age and is under the responsibility of the State.”.
(b) Foster Care Maintenance Payments.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

“(1) Eligibility.—Each State with a plan approved under this part shall make foster care maintenance payments on behalf of—

“(A) each child who is an individual described in section 475(8)(A) who has been removed from the home of a relative specified in section 406(a) (as in effect on July 16, 1996) into foster care if the removal and foster care placement met, and the placement continues to meet, the requirements of paragraph (2) of this subsection, and the child, while in the home, would have met the AFDC eligibility requirement of paragraph (3); and

“(B) each child who is an individual described in section 475(8)(B) who has entered foster care under the responsibility of the State if the child would have met the AFDC eligibility requirement of paragraph (3) on the day before the date on which the child reached the legal
age of majority and the foster care placement met and continues to meet the requirements of paragraph (5) of this subsection.”;

(B) in the heading of paragraph (2), by inserting “APPLICABLE TO MINORS” after “REQUIREMENTS”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO CHILDREN WHO HAVE ATTAINED THE AGE OF MAJORITY.—The foster care placement of a child who is an individual described in section 475(8)(B) meets the requirements of this paragraph if—

“(A) the foster care placement is in accordance with a voluntary placement agreement entered into by the individual;

“(B) the individual’s placement and care meet the requirement of paragraph (2)(B) of this subsection; and

“(C)(i) the individual has been placed in a foster family home, child-care institution, or dwelling described in subsection (b)(3)(C); or

“(ii) the individual has secured a dwelling described in subsection (b)(3)(D).”;

(2) in subsection (b)—
(A) by striking “or” at the end of paragraph (1);

(B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (2) and inserting ‘‘, or’’; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) in the case of a child who is an individual described in section 475(8)(B)—

“(A) in a home described in paragraph (1), in accordance with the payment rules set forth in paragraph (1);

“(B) in an institution described in paragraph (2), in accordance with the payment rules set forth in paragraph (2);

“(C) in a dwelling operated by an agency that provides social services to children and their families which supplements, supports, or substitutes parental care and supervision for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and that meets such standards for licensure or approval as are established by the State for the provision of the services, whether the payments therefor are made to the agency or directly to the individual; or

“(D) in housing rented or leased by the individual.”;}
(3) in subsection (e), by inserting “minor” before “child who”; and

(4) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “a minor” and inserting “a child”; and

(ii) by striking “the minor” and inserting “the child (or, if the child has attained 18 years of age, the child himself or herself)”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “a minor child” and inserting “a child (or, if the child has attained 18 years of age, the child himself or herself)”;

(ii) by inserting “(if the child is a minor)” after “obligations of the parents or guardians”.

(c) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 473(a)(1)(A) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 673(a)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting “who have not attained 21 years of age” after “special needs”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Effective as if included in the enactment of the Fostering Connec-
tions to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), section 473(a)(4) of
the Social Security Act (as amended by section 201(e) of the Fostering Connections to Success and
Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008) is amended to read as follows:
“(4)(A) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a payment may not be made pursuant to this sec-
tion to parents or relative guardians with respect to a child—
“(i) who has attained 21 years of age;
“(ii) who has not attained 21 years of age, if the State determines that the parents or relative
guardians, as the case may be, are no longer legally responsible for the support of the child; or
“(iii) if the State determines that the child is no longer receiving any support from the parents or relative guardians, as the case may be.
“(B) Parents or relative guardians who have been receiving adoption assistance payments or kinship guardian-
ship assistance payments under this section shall keep the State or local agency administering the program under
this section informed of circumstances which would, pur-
suant to this subsection, make them ineligible for the pay-
ments, or eligible for the payments in a different amount.”.

(d) Conforming Amendment.—Section 474(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(1)) is amended by striking “under section 472 for children in foster family homes or child-care institutions” and inserting “in accordance with section 472”.

(e) Effective Date.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2011.

SEC. 202. IMPROVEMENTS TO JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM.

(a) Increase in Annual Authorization Level.—Section 477(h)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677(h)(1)) is amended by striking “$140,000,000” and inserting “$200,000,000”.

(b) Expansion of Eligibility for Services.—Section 477 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “18” and inserting “14”;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking “between 18 and 21” and inserting “who have attained 18 years of age, and who have not attained 25 years of age”; and
(C) in paragraph (7), by striking “16” and inserting “14”; 

(2) in each of subsections (b)(3)(A) and (b)(3)(B), by striking “21” and inserting “25”; and 

(3) in subsection (i)— 

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “youths who, after attaining 16 years of age, are adopt-
ed from, or enter kinship guardianship from, foster care” and inserting “youths in or exiting from foster care after attaining 14 years of age”; and 

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) through (6) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively. 

(c) Eligibility of Private Service Providers for Funds.—Section 477(b)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following: 

“(G) Distribute funds provided to the State under this section among a diverse range of qualified providers of services that are private entities, and ensure that the entities have equal opportunity to receive the funds.”. 

(d) Expansion of Program Evaluations.—Section 477(g)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(g)(1)) is amended—
(1) in the first sentence, by inserting “, and of model programs that focus on improving outcomes for youth aging out of care in the areas of education, employment, personal development, financial asset development, financial management skills, and housing” after “significance”; 

(2) in the second sentence, by striking “and personal development” and inserting “mental and physical health, healthy relationships, personal development, and housing, and on the use of room and board services and how the use of the services improve housing outcomes for youth”; and 

(3) in the third sentence, by inserting “, where practicable,” before “random assignment”.

(e) IMPROVING AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE SERVICES.—

(1) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—Section 477 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER RELATED PROGRAMS.—To improve access to the array of services available to youth transitioning out of foster care and assist States in leveraging available resources, the Secretary shall provide for the efficient distribution to States and local areas of information about Federal pro-
grams, other than the program established by this section, that may assist youth in their transition to self-sufficiency and provide guidance on how to access services under the programs.”.

(2) DUTIES OF THE STATE.—Section 477(b)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(b)(3)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) through (K) as subparagraphs (H) through (L), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) A certification by the chief executive officer that, when or before a child leaves foster care under the responsibility of the State, the State will inform the child of the full range of available financial asset development, financial management, housing, counseling, health, public benefit employment, and education services, and other appropriate support and services for which the child is eligible.”.

TITLE III—YOUNG FAMILY CONCERNS

SEC. 301. TANF STATE PLAN AMENDMENT.

Section 402(a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 602(a)(1)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:
“(vii) Identify the education and training, living arrangement, and other services needs of individuals described in section 408(a)(5)(B)(ii) who are potentially eligible to receive assistance under the State program funded under this part and establish policies, procedures, and strategies to address the needs.”.

SEC. 302. ADULT-SUPERVISED LIVING ARRANGEMENTS.

Section 408(a)(5)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 608(a)(5)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) Provision of adult-supervised living arrangement.—In the case of an individual who is described in clause (ii), the State agency referred to in section 402(a)(4) shall provide or ensure the provision of a second chance home, maternity group home, transitional living youth project, or other appropriate adult-supervised supportive living arrangement, taking into consideration the needs, concerns, and wishes of the individual, unless the State agency determines that the individual’s
current living arrangement is appropriate, and therefore, shall require that the individual and the minor child referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii)(II) reside in such living arrangement as a condition of the continued receipt of assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (or in an alternative appropriate arrangement, should circumstances change and the current arrangement cease to be appropriate).”;

(2) in clause (ii)—

(A) by redesignating subclauses (III) and (IV) as subclauses (V) and (VI), respectively;

and

(B) by inserting after subclause (II) the following:

“(III) the individual is a homeless youth;

“(IV) the individual is a street youth;”;

(3) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (vi) and inserting after clause (ii) the following:
“(iii) Disclosure of adult-supervised living arrangement options to individual.—The State agency shall ensure that individuals described in subparagraph (A)(ii) who are applicants or recipients of assistance are fully informed of all adult-supervised living arrangement options that satisfy the requirement of this subsection, and provide the individual the opportunity to request a specific adult-supervised living arrangement.

“(iv) Determination of adult-supervised living arrangement.—In determining the appropriateness of the individual’s current living arrangement in clause (i) and considering the individual’s request for a specific adult-supervised living arrangement in clause (iii), the State agency shall provide a written explanation of the determination, including a statement regarding the right to appeal the determination under clause (v), to the individual, if the determination is other than the adult-supervised living arrangement requested by the individual.
“(v) Right to appeal adult-supervised living arrangement.—If the State agency’s determination of appropriate adult-supervised living arrangement in clause (i) is other than the adult-supervised living arrangement requested by the individual in clause (iii), the individual shall have a right to appeal the State agency’s decision through appeal and dispute resolution mechanisms available in the State.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(vi) Definitions.—In this subparagraph:

“(I) Transitional living youth project.—The term ‘transitional living youth project’ has the same meaning as provided in section 387(6) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974.

“(II) Homeless youth.—The term ‘homeless youth’ has the same meaning as provided in section 387(3) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974.
“(III) Street youth.—The term ‘street youth’ has the same meaning as provided in section 387(5) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974.”.

SEC. 303. SUSPENSION OF TIME LIMIT FOR YOUNG ADULT PARENT INVOLVED IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING.

Section 408(a)(7)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 608(a)(7)(B)) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking “MINOR CHILD EXCEPTION” and inserting “AGE EXCEPTIONS”; and

(2) by striking clauses (i) and (ii) and inserting the following:

“(i) a minor child, and not the head of a household or married to the head of a household; or

“(ii) was pregnant or a parent, and—

“(I) had not attained 20 years of age, and was meeting all program requirements relating to education, training and living arrangements; or

“(II) had attained 20 but not 21 years of age, and was scheduled to
complete all program requirements relating to education or training.”.

SEC. 304. TRANSITIONAL COMPLIANCE.

Section 408(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 608(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by striking “if” and all that follows and inserting “if—

“(A) the individual does not participate in—

“(i) educational activities directed toward the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent; or

“(ii) an alternative educational or training program that has been approved by the State; and

“(B) 91 days have elapsed since the State has notified the individual that the individual is in violation of this paragraph. During the 91-day period described in the preceding sentence, if the individual is otherwise (but for this paragraph) eligible for assistance under the State program funded under this part, the State shall treat such individual’s application for such benefits as if the individual satisfied the requirements of subparagraph (A).”; and
(2) in paragraph (5)(A)(i), by inserting “, and 91 days have elapsed since the State has notified the individual that the individual is in violation of this paragraph. During the 91-day period described in the preceding sentence, if the individual is otherwise (but for this paragraph) eligible for assistance under the State program funded under this part, the State shall treat such individual’s application for such benefits as if the individual satisfied the residence requirements of the preceding sentence” before the period.

SEC. 305. SANCTION PROTECTIONS FOR MINOR PARENTS.

Section 408(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 608(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(12) A State to which a grant is made under section 403 of this Act shall not impose a sanction on a recipient of assistance under the State program funded under this part who is an individual described in paragraph (4) or (5)(B)(ii) of this subsection and whose household includes a minor who has received assistance under the State program funded under this part, under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program authorized by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, or under any other State program funded with qualified State expenditures.
(as defined in section 409(a)(7)(B)(i)), unless the State has established procedures that help recipients of assistance under the State program funded under this part understand, avoid, or end sanctions, and has applied the procedures to the recipient.”.

SEC. 306. TEEN PARENT STUDY AND REPORT.

Section 413 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 613) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) TEEN PARENT STUDY AND REPORT.—

“(1) STUDY OF TANF RECIPIENTS.—The Secretary shall conduct a study of recipients of assistance under State programs funded under this part who are parents and have not attained 20 years of age to determine the following:

“(A) Whether State data on the number of such recipients is accurately reflected in Federal data, including an examination of the extent to which such recipients who are members of a family are not reflected in the data, and an examination of the extent to which Federal estimation methods do not reflect the number of such recipients in a State.

“(B) What assessment procedures are utilized with such recipients, and whether there appear to be best practices that consider such
issues as whether the recipient has an educational barrier such as a learning disability or mental health problem.

“(C) Whether localities appear to have adequate and appropriate services that meet the needs of such recipients in areas such as infant care, age-appropriate adolescent health, education, training, and mental health, for services such as appropriate housing, mental health, and alternative education, whether staff assist teen parents in researching and locating such services including an appropriate living arrangement, and the extent to which such recipients who have not completed high school or the equivalent are encouraged to engage in education or work.

“(D) How State rules providing that, in determining the eligibility of such recipients for such assistance, the income of the recipient is deemed to include the income of any parents with whom such recipient is living appear to have affected the extent to which such recipients who are members of a family with income less than 200 percent of the poverty line (as defined in section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget
Reconciliation Act of 1981, including any revision required by such section, applicable to a family of the size involved) are able to participate in State programs funded under this part.

“(E) Demographic information such as—

“(i) the age of such recipients;

“(ii) the amount of time such recipients received such assistance in a given year;

“(iii) the number of children that such recipients have;

“(iv) school attainment by such recipients, by age;

“(v) the employment status of such recipients, such as whether a recipient has ever worked or has worked while in school;

“(vi) the child care arrangements of such recipients; and

“(vii) the living arrangements of such recipients.

“(2) Study of low-income teen parents who are not TANF recipients.—The Secretary shall conduct a study of a representative sample of low-income (as determined by the Secretary) teen parents who are not recipients of assistance under a
State program funded under this part, to determine
the following:

“(A) Whether the teen parent sought to
apply for such assistance.

“(B) Whether a teen parent who indicated
to a State a desire to apply for such assistance
received an application for such assistance.

“(C) Whether a teen parent who applied
for such assistance was subsequently contacted
by the State agency responsible for operating a
State program funded under this part.

“(3) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years
after the date of enactment of this subsection,
the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress
that contains the findings of the studies re-
quired by this subsection and recommendations
regarding such issues as how to improve data
reporting, State plans, State ‘best practice’ in-
formation sharing, and assessments.

“(B) ADVISORY GROUP.—The Secretary
shall establish an advisory group consisting of
representatives from organizations that work
with parents who have not attained 20 years of
age, to provide advice to the Secretary on ques-
tions relating to such parents that should be in-
vestigated and to provide comments to accom-
ppany the recommendations contained in the re-
port under subparagraph (A).”.

TITLE IV—WORK OPPORTUNITIES

SEC. 401. INCLUSION OF HOMELESS YOUTH AS QUALIFIED POPULATION FOR WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT.

(a) In General.—Paragraph (1) of section 51(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “or” at the end of subparagraph (H), by striking the pe-
riod at the end of subparagraph (I) and inserting “, or”, and adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(J) a qualified homeless youth.”.

(b) Qualified Homeless Youth.—Subsection (d) of section 51 of such Code is amended by redesignating paragraphs (11) through (13) as paragraphs (12) through (14), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (10) the following new paragraph:

“(11) Qualified Homeless Youth.—The term ‘qualified homeless youth’ means any individual who is certified by the designated local agency—

“(A) as having attained age 16 but not age 25 on the hiring date; and
“(B) as being described in paragraph (2) of section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a), as in effect on the date of the enactment of this paragraph, on the hiring date.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to individuals who begin work for the employer after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE V—SOCIAL SECURITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS

SEC. 501. LIMITATION ON USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY OR SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS PAID TO REPRESENTATIVE PAYEES ON BEHALF OF FOSTER CHILDREN FOR STATE COSTS.

(a) Amendments to Title II.—

(1) Exception to prohibition on assignments, etc.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 407) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) Subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to a payment made by a representative payee to reimburse a State as described in section 205(j)(9)(B)(i), but only to the extent that the payment is—
“(1) not prohibited by section 205(j)(9)(B)(i); and

“(2) made available, distributed, and applied in accordance with section 205(j)(9)(B)(iii).”.

(2) LIMITATION ON USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS.—Section 205(j)(9) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 405(j)(9)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “(A)” after “(9)”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(B)(i) A State or local government agency serving in any State as a representative payee under this subsection with respect an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of the State shall not use any (or, if the individual has not attained 14 years of age, more than 50 percent of any) benefits paid to the representative payee pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection to reimburse the State for—

“(I) foster care maintenance payments made pursuant to section 472; or

“(II) other payments made by the State or political subdivision of the State to cover any other cost or expense for an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of the State.

“(ii) An expense described in paragraph (4)(A)(i) of this subsection or section 1631(a)(2)(D) shall not be con-
sidered a cost or expense for purposes of clause (i) of this subparagraph.

“(iii) In any case in which the State or local government agency referred to in clause (i) determines that any portion of such individual’s benefit under this title which is held by such agency in accordance with this subsection would be available under the provisions of this subsection (other than this clause) to reimburse government costs in connection with such foster care, any amount of such portion of such benefit shall be available for such reimbursement only to the extent that such amount is made available to supplement, and not to replace, any amounts otherwise available from non-Federal sources to meet such government costs. Any amount of such reimbursement shall not be distributed into the general funds of the agency or the State or local government and may be applied only so as to increase funding for foster care services provided by the State or local government.”.

(b) Amendments to Title XVI.—

(1) Applicability of Title II Exception to Prohibition on Assignments, Etc.—Section 1631(d)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(d)(1)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “(A)” after “(1)”;

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(B) by striking “The provisions of” and inserting “Subject to subparagraph (B), the provisions of”; and

(C) by inserting at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) Subsection (a) of section 207 shall not apply to a payment made by a representative payee to reimburse a State as described in subsection (a)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of this section, but only to the extent that such payment is—

“(i) not prohibited by subsection (a)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of this section; and

“(ii) made available, distributed, and applied in accordance with subsection (a)(2)(A)(iv)(IV) of this section.”.

(2) LIMITATION ON USE OF SSI BENEFITS.—

Section 1631(a)(2)(A)(iv) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(a)(2)(A)(iv)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “(I)” after “(iv)”; and

(B) by inserting at the end the following new subclauses:

“(II) Subject to subclauses (III) and (IV), a State or local government agency serving in any State as a representative payee under this subsection with respect an eligible individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of the State shall not use any (or, if the individual

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has not attained 14 years of age, more than 50 percent of any) benefits paid to the representative payee pursuant to clause (ii) to reimburse the State for—

“(aa) foster care maintenance payments made pursuant to section 472; or

“(bb) other payments made by a State or political subdivision of a State to cover any other cost or expense for an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of the State.

“(III) For purposes of subclause (II)(bb), an expense described in subparagraph (D) or section 205(j)(4)(A)(i) shall not be considered a cost or expense.

“(IV) For purposes of subclause (II), if a State or local government agency determines that an amount of an individual’s benefit under this title that is held by the agency in accordance with this paragraph would be available under the provisions of this paragraph (other than this subclause) to reimburse government costs in connection with the foster care, such amount shall be available for such reimbursement only to the extent that the amount is made available to supplement, and not to replace, any amounts otherwise available from non-Federal sources to meet the government costs. Any amount of the reimbursement shall not be distributed into the general funds of the agency or the State or local government and may be ap-
plied only so as to increase funding for foster care services provided by such State or local government.”.

SEC. 502. SCREENING OF FOSTER CHILDREN FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS.

(a) State Plan Requirement.—Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (32);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (33) and inserting “; and”;

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(34) provides that, not later than 36 months after the date of enactment of the Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act of 2011, the State agency described in paragraph (2) shall—

“(A) develop and implement procedures to ensure that, within 60 days after the status of a child who is in foster care under the responsibility of the State is first reviewed pursuant to the procedures described in section 475(5)(B), the child is screened to determine their potential eligibility for benefits under title II and for supplemental security income benefits under title XVI; and
“(B) if such screening results in a determination that the child is potentially eligible for any such benefits—

“(i) provide the child with assistance in applying for and, as necessary, appealing any decisions made with respect to such benefits; and

“(ii) if there is no other suitable candidate available, apply to become the representative payee for the child with respect to such benefits.”.

(b) GAO STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to determine whether States have substantially complied with the amendments made by this section during the 6-year period following enactment of this Act, including whether States have—

(A) established successful procedures that screen all foster children under the responsibility of the States for their potential eligibility for benefits under title II of the Social Security Act and for supplemental security income benefits under title XVI of such Act;
(B) provided all such potentially eligible foster children assistance in applying for, and appealing decisions made with respect to, the benefits; and

(C) implemented procedures to identify suitable nongovernmental candidates to serve as representative payees for children in foster care with respect to the benefits.

(2) **Report to the Congress.**—Not later than 1 year after completion of the study described in paragraph (1), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Congress a report containing the results of such study.

**SEC. 503. NOTICE TO ATTORNEY OR GUARDIAN AD LITEM FOR FOSTER CHILD OF DETERMINATION TO PAY SOCIAL SECURITY OR SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS TO REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE.**

(a) **Amendment to Title II.**—Section 205(j)(2)(E)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(j)(2)(E)(ii)) is amended by inserting “, except that, in the case of an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of a State, such notice shall also be provided to the attorney or guardian ad litem appointed to represent the individual pursuant to section**
106(b)(2)(A)(xiii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and, if the individual has attained 14 years of age, to the individual” before the period.

(b) Amendment to Title XVI.—Section 1631(a)(2)(B)(xii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(a)(2)(B)(xii)) is amended by inserting “, except that, in the case of an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of a State, such notice shall also be provided to the attorney or guardian ad litem appointed to represent the individual pursuant to section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and, if the individual has attained 14 years of age, to the individual” before the period.

SEC. 504. MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN.

(a) Plan for Achieving Self-Support.—Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)), as amended by section 502(a) of this Act, is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (33);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (34) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:
“(35) provides that, with respect to each child in foster care under the responsibility of the State who is a recipient of benefits under title II or supplemental security income benefits under title XVI, the State agency shall develop a plan is individually designed to best meet the current and future needs of the child and enable the child to achieve self-support after leaving foster care, in accordance with the following requirements:

“(A)(i) The plan shall set forth a strategy to conserve benefits not necessary for the immediate needs of the child, as determined pursuant to clause (ii), in a manner that best meets the future needs and educational and employment interests of the child, and for the placement of any such benefits in an account of the type described in section 1631(a)(2)(F).

“(ii) The plan shall provide for a determination as to whether the child has immediate needs for which such benefits should be used consistent with sections 205(j)(10)(B) and 1631(a)(2)(A)(iv).

“(iii) The plan shall provide that any assets set aside under the plan shall be conserved, remain inaccessible to the child (with the excep-
tion of any allowable expenses described in sec-
section 1631(a)(2)(F)(ii)(II) or any other use ap-
proved by the Secretary as being in the best in-
terests of the child), and placed in the account
described in clause (i) of this subparagraph,
until the later of the date that the child attains
18 years of age or ceases to be under the re-
sponsibility of the State, at which time any as-
sets subject to the plan shall be accessible to
the child to—

“(I) secure and maintain stable hous-
ing;

“(II) pursue educational opportuni-
ties, including job training, vocational
training, or obtaining a professional li-
cense;

“(III) purchase a vehicle;

“(IV) operate a business;

“(V) pay for employment-related
costs, including the cost of uniforms, insur-
ance, licenses, or complying with licensing
requirements;

“(VI) pay for medical or health-re-
lated expenses; or
“(VII) pay for any expenses reasonably expected to assist the child in becoming self-sufficient.

“(B) The State agency shall—

“(i) develop and implement the plan in collaboration with the child (on an age-appropriate basis), the social worker for the child, the person acting as the representative payee for the child pursuant to section 205(j) or 1631(a)(2), and the attorney or guardian ad litem appointed to represent the child pursuant to section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; and

“(ii) in developing and implementing the plan, make reasonable efforts to seek input from the parents and caretakers of the child.

“(C)(i) The State agency shall complete the plan not later than 60 days after the status of the child is first reviewed pursuant to the procedures described in section 475(5)(B).

“(ii) The State agency shall ensure that each subsequent review of the status of the child includes consideration of an updated
version of the plan and a report on the progress
made in implementing such plan.

“(D)(i) Following completion of the plan,
the State agency shall provide a copy of the
plan to the attorney or guardian ad litem ap-
pointed to represent the child pursuant to sec-
tion 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii) of the Child Abuse Pre-
vention and Treatment Act no later than 30
days prior to the subsequent review of the sta-
tus of the child under the procedures described
in section 475(5)(B).

“(ii) Not later than 30 days prior to each
subsequent review, the State agency shall pro-
vide an updated copy of the plan to the attor-
ney or guardian ad litem so appointed.

“(E)(i) The child may request the plan to
be modified as part of a review of their status
under the procedures described in section
475(5)(B), through a separate hearing, or as
part of a permanency hearing under the proce-
dures described in section 475(5)(C).

“(ii) For purposes of any administrative or
judicial review proceeding, the plan shall not be
treated as meeting the requirements of this
paragraph with respect to a child unless the
plan is determined by the reviewer to be the best available means of meeting the current and future needs and educational and employment interests of the child.”.

(b) **Provisions Relating to Representative Payees.**—

(1) **Amendments to Title II.**—Section 205(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(j)), as amended by sections 501(a)(2) and 503(a), is further amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (8), (9), and (10) as paragraphs (9), (10), and (11), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following new paragraph:

“(8) For purposes of benefits paid to a representative payee under paragraph (1) on behalf of an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of a State, the representative payee shall manage such benefits in accordance with the plan developed for the individual pursuant to section 471(a)(35).”.

(2) **Amendment to Title XVI.**—Section 1631(a)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“(J) For purposes of benefits paid to a representative payee under subparagraph (A)(ii) on behalf of an individual who is in foster care under the responsibility of a State, the representative payee shall manage such benefits in accordance with the plan developed for the individual pursuant to section 471(a)(35).”.

(e) EXCLUSION FROM RESOURCES UNDER THE SSI PROGRAM.—Section 1613(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1382b(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (15);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (16) and inserting “; and”;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following:

“(17) any assets managed on behalf of an eligible individual in accordance with a plan developed for such individual pursuant to section 471(a)(35).”.

(d) EXCLUSION FROM RESOURCE LIMITATION.—

Subparagraph (B) of section 472(a)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672(a)(3)) is amended by inserting “, and excluding any assets held in an account that has been established pursuant to paragraph (35) of section 471(a) and managed in accordance with a plan developed under such paragraph” after “as so in effect”.

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SEC. 505. SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE FURNISHED IN CASH OR IN KIND DISREGARDED IN DETERMINING INCOME OF FOSTER CHILDREN UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM.

Section 1612(a)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1382a(a)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking “another nonprofit organization, and” and inserting “another nonprofit organization,”; and

(2) by inserting “, and (iv) clause (i) shall not apply in the case of a child who is in foster care under the responsibility of a State” before the semi-colon at the end.

SEC. 506. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES.

(a) In General.—Pursuant to a request by a State agency that is responsible for administering, or supervising the administration of, the program authorized by part E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide such agency with technical assistance in carrying out the amendments made by this Act.

(b) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
SEC. 507. EFFECTIVE DATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b) or as otherwise provided, the amendments made by this Act shall apply to benefits payable for months beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO PLANS FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by section 504(a) of this Act shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply to payments under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act for calendar quarters beginning after such first day.

(2) DELAY PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION REQUIRED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) is required in order for a State plan approved under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by section 504(a) of this Act, the plan shall not be regarded as failing to meet any of the additional re-
requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. If the State has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session is deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.