

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4378

To encourage the development of specialized foster care programs designed specifically for large sibling groups, sibling groups with a wide age range, and sibling groups with complex needs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 9, 2021

Mr. BACON (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mrs. LAWRENCE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To encourage the development of specialized foster care programs designed specifically for large sibling groups, sibling groups with a wide age range, and sibling groups with complex needs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Sibling Re-
5 lationships in Foster Care Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPETITIVE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM TO ENCOUR-**
2 **AGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED**
3 **FOSTER CARE PROGRAMS DESIGNED SPE-**
4 **CIFICALLY FOR LARGE SIBLING GROUPS, SIB-**
5 **LING GROUPS WITH A WIDE AGE RANGE, AND**
6 **SIBLING GROUPS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
8 Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Sec-
9 retary”) shall establish a competitive grant pilot program
10 under which, during the 5-year period that begins with
11 the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary
12 shall make not more than 5 grants to eligible entities who
13 have applied therefor to encourage the development of spe-
14 cialized foster care programs designed specifically for
15 groups of 3 or more siblings, sibling groups with a wide
16 age range, and sibling groups with, or that include a youth
17 with, complex needs. For purposes of the preceding sen-
18 tence, a youth has complex needs if the youth exhibits
19 challenging or risky behaviors that could cause themself
20 or others serious harm, has mental health needs of such
21 severity that the participation of the youth in daily life
22 may be impaired either with or without services being ren-
23 dered to help, has a disability (as defined under the Ameri-
24 cans with Disabilities Act), or has an illness that requires
25 continuous monitoring or is life-threatening, and complex
26 needs include issues that may arise from siblings in foster

1 care with a different parent, which could impact the ability
2 of the siblings to be placed together, or from a youth with
3 a history of trauma.

4 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term “el-
5 ible entity” means a State child welfare agency, a State,
6 tribal, or local agency, a faith- or community-based orga-
7 nization, or a nonprofit organization that has expertise
8 and demonstrated experience, as well as state supervision,
9 in administering a foster care program.

10 (c) APPLICATIONS.—An eligible entity that desires to
11 receive a grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
12 retary an application that includes—

13 (1) a description of how funds received under
14 the grant will be used to place together sibling
15 groups described in subsection (a);

16 (2) a description of the specialized foster care
17 program involved, and how the program is designed
18 for the placement of sibling groups described in sub-
19 section (a);

20 (3) data describing the challenges of placing,
21 and number of, sibling groups described in sub-
22 section (a) that are awaiting placements; and

23 (4) such other information as the Secretary
24 may reasonably require.

1 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under
2 this section may use the grant funds only to develop spe-
3 cialized foster care programs which are—

4 (1) designed to identify available placements
5 for, and place together, sibling groups described in
6 subsection (a); and

7 (2) evidence-based, and proven to substantially
8 increase joint sibling placements.

9 (e) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—As a condition of
10 receiving a grant under this section, the grant recipient
11 shall submit to the Secretary a written report on the num-
12 ber of children in the specialized foster care program in-
13 volved, the size of the sibling groups served by the pro-
14 gram, the methods used to place children with their sib-
15 lings under the program, and the outcomes of the place-
16 ments.

17 (f) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may prescribe
18 such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this
19 section.

20 (g) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPRO-
21 PRIATIONS.—To carry out this section, there are author-
22 ized to be appropriated to the Secretary not more than
23 \$10,000,000, which is authorized to remain available dur-
24 ing the 5-year period referred to in subsection (a).

○