

Union Calendar No. 557

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7529

[Report No. 119-640]

To require States to consider legal issues affecting youth as part of case planning and to provide States with the option to use funds from the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to support access to legal services and counseling.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. LAHOOD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

MAY 11, 2026

Additional sponsors: Mr. SCHWEIKERT and Mr. LAWLER

MAY 11, 2026

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on February 12, 2026]

A BILL

To require States to consider legal issues affecting youth as part of case planning and to provide States with the option to use funds from the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to support access to legal services and counseling.

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 “Fresh Starts for Foster*
 5 *Youth Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. LEGAL CONSULTING AND ACCESS UNDER THE JOHN**

7 **H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUC-**

8 **CESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD.**

9 *Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677)*
 10 *is amended—*

11 *(1) in subsection (a)(4), by inserting “legal*
 12 *counseling access,” after “education,”; and*

13 *(2) in subsection (b)(3), by adding at the end the*
 14 *following:*

15 *“(L) A certification by the chief executive*
 16 *officer of the State that the relevant case plan-*
 17 *ning and other processes employed by the State*
 18 *take into consideration certain legal issues affect-*
 19 *ing housing, education, entry into employment,*
 20 *and family connections of current and former*
 21 *foster youth and the efforts required to address*
 22 *the issues, including with respect to State court*
 23 *records, legal recognition of family relationships,*
 24 *and matters relating to custody and perma-*
 25 *nency.”.*

1 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

2 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—*The amendments made by this Act*
3 *shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the date*
4 *of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to payments*
5 *under section 477 of the Social Security Act pursuant to*
6 *plans approved by the Secretary of Health and Human*
7 *Services on or after such date.*

8 (b) *DELAY PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION RE-*
9 *QUIRED.*—*If the Secretary of Health and Human Services*
10 *determines that State legislation (other than legislation ap-*
11 *propriating funds) is required in order for a State plan*
12 *developed pursuant to section 477 of the Social Security*
13 *Act to meet the additional requirements imposed by the*
14 *amendments made by this Act, the plan shall not be re-*
15 *garded as failing to meet any of the additional requirements*
16 *before the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter beginning*
17 *after the first regular session of the State legislature that*
18 *begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. For pur-*
19 *poses of the preceding sentence, if the State has a 2-year*
20 *legislative session, each year of the session is deemed to be*
21 *a separate regular session of the State legislature.*

Union Calendar No. 557

119TH CONGRESS
2D Session

H. R. 7529

[Report No. 119-640]

A BILL

To require States to consider legal issues affecting youth as part of case planning and to provide States with the option to use funds from the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to support access to legal services and counseling.

MAY 11, 2026

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed