

Another problem with H.R. 1393 is that it essentially provides a roadmap for state income tax liability avoidance.

By allowing an employer to rely on the employee's determination of the time he or she is expected to spend working in another state during the year, the bill prevents the employer from withholding an employee's state income taxes to a non-resident state.

This would be the result even if the employer is aware that the employee has been working in a state more than 30 days, as long as that state cannot prove that the employee committed fraud in making his annual determination and that the employer knew it.

Rather than proceeding with this flawed bill, the House should be considering a fair and uniform framework to allow states to collect taxes owed on remote sales.

By staying silent since the Supreme Court's 1992 Quill decision, Congress has failed to ensure that states have the authority to collect the sales and use tax on Internet purchases.

Placing brick and mortar businesses at a competitive disadvantage hurts main street Americans and means fewer local jobs and fewer opportunities.

Lost tax revenues mean that state and local governments will have fewer resources to provide their residents essential services, such as education and police and fire protection.

We owe it to our local communities, our local retailers, and state and local governments to act this Congress.

I am disappointed that rather than moving the bipartisan eFairness legislation that our communities need, we are considering H.R. 1393 instead.

Accordingly, I oppose H.R. 1393.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1393.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2847) to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2847

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM AND RELATED PROVISIONS.

(a) AUTHORITY TO SERVE FORMER FOSTER YOUTH UP TO AGE 23.—Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by inserting "(or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with such subsection)" after "21 years of age";

(2) in subsection (b)(3)(A)—

(A) by inserting "(i)" before "A certification";

(B) by striking "children who have left foster care" and all that follows through the period and inserting "youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age."; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(ii) If the State has elected under section 475(8)(B) to extend eligibility for foster care to all children who have not attained 21 years of age, or if the Secretary determines that the State agency responsible for administering the State plans under this part and part B uses State funds or any other funds not provided under this part to provide services and assistance for youths who have aged out of foster care that are comparable to the services and assistance the youths would receive if the State had made such an election, the certification required under clause (i) may provide that the State will provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 23 years of age."; and

(3) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking "children who have left foster care" and all that follows through the period and inserting "youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age (or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subparagraph (A)(i) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with subparagraph (A)(ii)).";

(b) AUTHORITY TO REDISTRIBUTE UNSPENT FUNDS.—Section 477(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by inserting "or does not expend allocated funds within the time period specified under section 477(d)(3)" after "provided by the Secretary"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(5) REDISTRIBUTION OF UNEXPENDED AMOUNTS.—

"(A) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—To the extent that amounts paid to States under this section in a fiscal year remain unexpended by the States at the end of the succeeding fiscal year, the Secretary may make the amounts available for redistribution in the second succeeding fiscal year among the States that apply for additional funds under this section for that second succeeding fiscal year.

"(B) REDISTRIBUTION.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall redistribute the amounts made available under subparagraph (A) for a fiscal year among eligible applicant States. In this subparagraph, the term 'eligible applicant State' means a State that has applied for additional funds for the fiscal year under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines that the State will use the funds for the purpose for which originally allotted under this section.

"(ii) AMOUNT TO BE REDISTRIBUTED.—The amount to be redistributed to each eligible applicant State shall be the amount so made available multiplied by the State foster care ratio (as defined in subsection (c)(4), except that, in such subsection, 'all eligible applicant States (as defined in subsection (d)(5)(B)(i))' shall be substituted for 'all States').

"(iii) TREATMENT OF REDISTRIBUTED AMOUNT.—Any amount made available to a State under this paragraph shall be regarded as part of the allotment of the State under this section for the fiscal year in which the redistribution is made.

"(C) TRIBES.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'State' includes an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium that receives an allotment under this section.".

(c) EXPANDING AND CLARIFYING THE USE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(3)) is amended—

(A) by striking "on the date" and all that follows through "23" and inserting "to remain eligible until they attain 26"; and

(B) by inserting ", but in no event may a youth participate in the program for more than 5 years (whether or not consecutive)" before the period.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 477(i)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(1)) is amended by inserting "who have attained 14 years of age" before the period.

(d) OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 477 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677), as amended by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking "INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM" and inserting "PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD";

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services" and inserting "support all youth who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in their transition to adulthood through transitional services";

(ii) by inserting "and post-secondary education" after "high school diploma"; and

(iii) by striking "training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills" and inserting "training and opportunities to practice daily living skills (such as financial literacy training and driving instruction)";

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment" and inserting "who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older achieve meaningful, permanent connections with a caring adult";

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking "who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions" and inserting "who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, positive youth development, and experiential learning that reflects what their peers in intact families experience"; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating paragraphs (5) through (8) as paragraphs (4) through (7);

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(D), by striking "adolescents" and inserting "youth"; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by inserting "including training on youth development" after "to provide training"; and

(II) by striking "adolescents preparing for independent living" and all that follows through the period and inserting "youth preparing for a successful transition to adulthood and making a permanent connection with a caring adult";

(ii) in subparagraph (H), by striking "adolescents" each place it appears and inserting "youth"; and

(iii) in subparagraph (K)—

(I) by striking "an adolescent" and inserting "a youth"; and

(II) by striking "the adolescent" each place it appears and inserting "the youth"; and

(4) in subsection (f), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the National Youth in Transition Database and any other databases in which States report outcome measures relating to children in foster care and children who have aged out of foster care or left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption. The report shall include the following:

“(A) A description of the reasons for entry into foster care and of the foster care experiences, such as length of stay, number of placement settings, case goal, and discharge reason of 17-year-olds who are surveyed by the National Youth in Transition Database and an analysis of the comparison of that description with the reasons for entry and foster care experiences of children of other ages who exit from foster care before attaining age 17.

“(B) A description of the characteristics of the individuals who report poor outcomes at ages 19 and 21 to the National Youth in Transition Database.

“(C) Benchmarks for determining what constitutes a poor outcome for youth who remain in or have exited from foster care and plans the executive branch will take to incorporate these benchmarks in efforts to evaluate child welfare agency performance in providing services to children transitioning from foster care.

“(D) An analysis of the association between types of placement, number of overall placements, time spent in foster care, and other factors, and outcomes at ages 19 and 21.

“(E) An analysis of the differences in outcomes for children in and formerly in foster care at age 19 and 21 among States.”.

(e) CLARIFYING DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED TO FOSTER YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE.—Section 475(5)(I) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5)(I)) is amended by inserting after “REAL ID Act of 2005” the following: “, and any official documentation necessary to prove that the child was previously in foster care”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2847.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.

In fiscal year 2015, almost 21,000 youth aged out of foster care, meaning they left foster care without a permanent family connection. Many of them are often poorly prepared for adulthood and lack some of the basic skills they need to be successful adults.

Last year, the House passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, a bill that would improve the lives of children and families by making sure more children can stay safely at home and not enter foster care in the first place, helping to make sure fewer children age out of care. The bill also updated the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to allow States to assist older former foster youth up to the age of 23, including providing education and training vouchers, to help those young people who do age out to have a better future. Unfortunately, it did not pass the Senate, so it never became law.

I am glad my good friend, Mr. FASO, introduced the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act to highlight the needs of these older youth, and I know many will benefit from the changes made by this bill.

Specifically, this bill would support older youth leaving foster care by allowing existing funds used for financial housing, counseling, and employment support to support older youth leaving care. It would also allow HHS to redistribute unspent funds if a State has money remaining at the end of the fiscal year so more youth can be helped with existing resources. And through this bill, we will also be able to learn more about youth leaving foster care and their outcomes, which will help us develop better policies in the years ahead.

I am grateful for the opportunity we have today to support this bill. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, which would help to ensure that all the congressional resources that would be provided for foster youth will indeed be utilized and make sure they are used to help them in the furtherance of their education and becoming independent.

My colleague, KAREN BASS, who visited me just a few weeks ago, has been a leader on this legislation and on foster youth issues for a number of years, and our committee has worked closely with her to move it forward today.

I want to note that this is one of five bills the House is considering today to help at-risk families and children in foster care. All of these bills passed the House last year as part of the Family First Prevention Services Act, which also provided significant new investment in substance abuse, mental health, and parenting skills services to help kids and families avoid foster care when possible.

We continue to work on a bipartisan basis with our leadership and our colleagues in the Senate to find a way to move forward on broader foster care improvements, but today's action provides a good opportunity to once again highlight the sharp rise of children in

foster care in the United States and, indeed, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, fueled in part by the opiate crisis.

In Massachusetts, between 2011 and 2015, the number of petitions to remove children from their homes grew 38 percent. Today, Massachusetts is home to nearly 10,000 kids in foster care. Over 1,000 of them are considered at risk of reaching adulthood without being adopted or safely reunified with their birth families. That is why it is so important that we do everything we can to help them finish their education and develop mentoring relationships with supportive adults.

While I am pleased that our committee and the full House are working together to help these young people, we can't ignore the bigger picture, which is the President's attempt to overturn the Affordable Care Act, because it will have real and measurable negative effects on these kids.

Republican Medicaid cuts jeopardize health coverage for older foster youth, the same youth we are trying to help with this bill. By cutting the essential health benefits and Medicaid, there will be a consequence. In turn, this endangers access to substance abuse treatment and, by extension, many of the treatment centers themselves.

Republican proposals to end the Social Services Block Grant would reduce States' abilities to provide substance abuse, mental healthcare, and supportive services to foster parents.

While these larger issues are deeply troubling, today's five children welfare bills, including the one before us now, represent an improvement over the status quo, and it is refreshing to note the bipartisan collaboration that is involved.

In addition to Congresswoman BASS' leadership on this bill to help foster youth, let me also recognize my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee who are providing great leadership on these very issues—Mr. DAVIS, Ms. CHU, and Ms. SEWELL—for their work on behalf of foster children as reflected in these bills that they have co-authored and that we are considering today.

I urge our colleagues to support this bill and the other bipartisan child welfare improvements being considered today and to work with us to even do more to help foster youth succeed.

I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), be allowed to control the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to express support and ask my colleagues to support our

legislation, H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the cosponsors of this legislation, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT).

Our legislation is designed to help support older foster youth as they transition into adulthood by making limited but much-needed changes to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

While the Chafee program has largely enhanced outcomes for former foster youth, there is still room for improvement. Of the individuals who age out of foster care, nearly 20 percent will be homeless after 18, only half will be employed at age 24, and less than 3 percent will earn a college degree. This legislation seeks to improve on those results.

If enacted, our legislation would support the education of foster youth who leave care by extending the age of eligibility for education and training vouchers up to the age of 26. By changing the eligibility, we can help improve employment outcomes and job opportunities for older youth as they leave the system.

Additionally, this legislation will help youth who age out to maintain benefits by ensuring that they are provided with the necessary documentation that proves they were previously in foster care.

Finally, our legislation would extend the financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other services for former foster care youth. Currently, support services are only available to youth between the ages of 18 and 21. Under this legislation, States would be able to extend coverage up to the age of 23.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that this legislation is supported by many organizations throughout the Nation, including the Alliance for Children's Rights, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the California State Association of Counties, the Child Welfare League of America, Children Now, County Welfare Directors Association of California, the March of Dimes, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. WALORSKI. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO).

Mr. FASO. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation so that we can help improve outcomes for some of our Nation's most vulnerable individuals.

□ 1545

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

I strongly support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. This bill would expand eligibility for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program services and education for older foster youth, and ensure that all funds and education vouchers are used. I want to commend my colleague, Representative BASS, for her longstanding leadership on this bill.

As has been indicated by the ranking member, this important bill, and the other child welfare bills we will consider today, come from the Families First Prevention Services Act. The Families First Prevention Services Act begins a fundamental shift in Federal child welfare policy to preserving families rather than separating them. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we enact the larger bill with these important child welfare provisions and as we consider the other bills separately today.

I would like to note that there are, indeed, five child welfare bills on the floor this afternoon, which is a real testament to the leadership of Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member NEAL. So I commend both of them for their leadership in bringing the Ways and Means Committee together to the extent that we can have five bills that have been researched, that have been debated; levels of agreement have been reached.

I strongly support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS), my good friend.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I also want to sincerely thank Chairman KEVIN BRADY and the members of the Ways and Means Committee for their continued and invaluable work to protect America's children and strengthening our child welfare policy, as is in evidence in these five bills we are considering today.

Mr. Speaker, foster care issues rarely drive our national media headlines, yet, to the children who are in the child welfare system, the importance of finding solutions and eliminating the barriers that would ensure better futures, better outcomes, and a permanent connection to a loving family can make fundamental, lifelong differences to those who are some of America's most vulnerable children.

The goal of the Family First legislation, of which these bills are components, is to respond to the devastating data pertaining to the outcomes for foster youth who age out of care, often without any permanent connection and without the life skills and support sys-

tems necessary to thrive as independent adults.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard so many times from the States that there is a need to make our Federal child welfare funding flexible enough so that we never incentivize the placement of children into foster care who would safely receive care in their homes or with safe, loving relatives. This bipartisan package of child welfare system improvements makes important steps toward improving our child welfare system to better protect children and families, and I am certainly delighted to support its passage.

I want to thank, Mr. Speaker, again, those colleagues that have worked on this for their invaluable work on this critically important legislation.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member DAVIS for yielding.

I want to give a big thanks to my friend and colleague, Representative KAREN BASS of California. She is a true champion for our foster youth. I was happy to participate in her Foster Youth Shadow Day last month, which gave me the opportunity to meet with a constituent of mine that directly benefits from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to host a foster child next year.

I also want to voice my strong support for Representative BASS' bill, H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. The current Chafee Foster Care Independence Program plays an important role in our larger foster care system, and the services it provides should be extended to cover older youth up to the age of 23.

I was able to hear firsthand from my foster youth shadow, Khadejah Moore, about the struggles that foster youth face when they age out of the system. These young adults are thrown into the real world with little to no support system. It is an incredibly frightening time for these young youth. But if we can extend the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and also allow youth more time to use education vouchers, they have a better chance of having the opportunity to graduate college and successfully enter the workforce.

This is an important, commonsense bill, and I want to thank both Representative BASS and Representative FASO for introducing this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2847.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2847, the bill offered by my friend

and colleague, KAREN BASS, a tireless leader on foster youth and child welfare.

I recently hosted an amazing young woman named Ruth during Foster Youth Shadow Day here on the Hill. The message Ruth wanted lawmakers to hear is that the obstacles she faces every day as a 19-year-old have not suddenly stopped now that she has aged out of foster care. Ruth has a resilient spirit and unstoppable determination, but she should not be left out in the cold as she pursues her education and her goal of helping other foster youth in the future.

The Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act will help people like Ruth by making vital changes to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, an important source of funding for foster youth.

Currently, foster youth are only eligible for Chafee services if they are between the ages of 16 and 21. This bill expands access to the services provided by the program to include youth between the ages of 14 and 23. This is such a crucial change to the program since foster youth like Ruth face so many daunting challenges during the period of young adulthood as they transition toward independence and self-sufficiency.

Providing essential services such as access to older mentors and role models, connections to employment opportunities, and education vouchers for foster youth after they reach the age of 18 are key sources of support for foster youth. This bill helps ensure that foster youth have the resources needed to become healthy, thriving adults.

Thanks again to Representative BASS for her work on this bill.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the sponsor of this bill.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my legislation, in conjunction with Representative FASO, to support the education and advancement of foster youth. I want to thank the Representative for his leadership on this issue. I also want to thank Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member NEAL for their leadership on behalf of the Nation's foster youth.

I do think it is very remarkable, as several other speakers have said, that today we are bringing forward five bipartisan bills to improve the Nation's foster care system. Each one of the bills addresses a serious challenge or gap in that system.

H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, allows States to expand the Chafee Grant Program to foster youth up to the age of 23. Currently, the program ends at 21. The Chafee Grant Program provides educational grants and other services to help young people transition into adulthood and become independent.

In May, as part of National Foster Youth Shadow Day that is organized by the National Foster Youth Institute, I had the opportunity to meet a young woman named Doniesha Thomas. Doniesha is from Los Angeles, and spent 20 years in foster care before she aged out. She described her foster home as abusive, and eventually she had to move several times.

Against tremendous odds, Doniesha has continued to persevere and is currently a college student at Los Angeles Trade Tech College, majoring in the administration of justice and minoring in paralegal studies.

Doniesha is just one of a small number of foster youth who actually make it to college. This is despite nearly 70 percent of foster youth expressing a desire to attend college. Those, like Doniesha, who are accepted and attend college face another hurdle, which is graduating. Currently, only 3 percent of foster youth who attend college graduate. Programs like Chafee are designed to help foster youth advance in college, trade school, and employment.

During National Foster Youth Shadow Day, I had the opportunity to speak to many other young people, and several of them described challenges that they face after—well, if they were lucky to graduate high school, where they attend college and then something happens; either they run out of resources or their housing falls through and they have to leave college, so their college is interrupted.

That is why this legislation is so important, because it allows for the flexibility; if the young person is not able to complete college in 4 years, they do have a couple of other years.

One of the things that many people don't realize is that when young people age out of the foster youth system—which typically is at 18, sometimes is at 21, depending on the State—that many times we literally put these young people on the street. They are 18 years old. They are in their foster home. They are given a bag, typically a large-sized trash bag, with all of their belongings, and they are put out on the street left to fend for themselves. With today's economic challenges, there are no 18-year-olds that can fend for themselves without a safety net.

If we think of middle class children, transitioning into adulthood is typically what happens at college. They go to college and they have housing. But if they have any challenges, they can always call home. They can text their parents. Their parents are there to rescue them in case they run out of money or something happens with their housing or their grades.

If we think of a young person out of the child welfare system who is literally put on the streets at the age of 18, you can only imagine what happens; which is why so many children in the foster care system wind up incarcerated. Many young girls wind up trafficked; and we did legislation on that a few weeks ago.

So if we want to stop what happens on the other end, with many young children winding up incarcerated, or early pregnancies, or other challenges, we need to make sure that we provide support for them early on.

H.R. 2847 will allow the flexibility for a student, again, who might need more time to complete their education. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, to give foster youth the same type of flexibility and support that we provide our own children.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

H.R. 2847 would provide important assistance for youth aging out of foster care.

In my State of Illinois, 22 percent of the more than 16,000 children placed in foster care in 2015 are aging out. Illinois is widely regarded as a leader among States when it comes to foster youth aging out of care; therefore, it is, indeed, one of the first jurisdictions in which young people who are in foster care on their 18th birthday were able to remain in beyond the age of 18.

Research conducted by the University of Chicago found that allowing foster youth to remain in care beyond the age of 18 is associated with an increase in child well-being, including postsecondary educational attainment. Specifically, former foster youth from Illinois are twice as likely to have ever attended college, and more than twice as likely to have completed at least 1 year of college by age 21, compared with foster youth in other States that have not been given the option to stay in care beyond 18 years of age.

□ 1600

Due to school mobility issues experienced in high school, only 58 percent of foster youth graduate from high school by age 19, which makes it unlikely that they would be graduated from college by age 21.

Extending access to Chafee Independence Act programs to age 23 rather than cutting these young people off at age 21 would ensure these youth are able to be supported beyond their first year of college. We know that when students lose access to critical financial aid resources such as the education training voucher in the middle of their college journey, it forces them to drop out of college in search of employment.

Last Saturday, I spent 2 hours with a group of young people who had been organized by a young fellow, Kenneth Bennett's son. His name is Taylor Bennett. Taylor is the younger brother of Chance the Rapper. He is 21 years of age and had organized young people who were transgender, who were homeless, who were out of school, who were in need of assistance and help, and they were pleased to know that we were going to be considering this legislation today, which I strongly support.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Mr. FASO and Mr. REED from New York and Ms. BASS from California for introducing this important bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2847.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REDUCING UNNECESSARY BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2866) to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2866

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act".

SEC. 2. REVIEWING AND IMPROVING LICENSING STANDARDS FOR PLACEMENT IN A RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILY HOME.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF REPUTABLE MODEL LICENSING STANDARDS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify reputable model licensing standards with respect to the licensing of foster family homes (as defined in section 472(c)(1) of the Social Security Act).

(b) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 422(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (18), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (19), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(20) provide that, not later than April 1, 2019, the State shall submit to the Secretary information addressing—

"(A) whether the State licensing standards are in accord with model standards identified by the Secretary, and if not, the reason for the specific deviation and a description as to why having a standard that is reasonably in accord with the corresponding national model standards is not appropriate for the State;

"(B) whether the State has elected to waive standards established in 471(a)(10)(A)

for relative foster family homes (pursuant to waiver authority provided by 471(a)(10)(D)), a description of which standards the State most commonly waives, and if the State has not elected to waive the standards, the reason for not waiving these standards;

"(C) if the State has elected to waive standards specified in subparagraph (B), how caseworkers are trained to use the waiver authority and whether the State has developed a process or provided tools to assist caseworkers in waiving nonsafety standards per the authority provided in 471(a)(10)(D) to quickly place children with relatives; and

"(D) a description of the steps the State is taking to improve caseworker training or the process, if any."

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan under section 479B of the Social Security Act or a cooperative agreement or contract entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extent their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2866, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, introduced by my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Introducing this legislation, Congressman SMUCKER was joined by our Ways and Means colleague, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL from across the aisle. The bill has strong bipartisan support, including mine. I am a cosponsor. And the Child Welfare League of America has strongly endorsed this legislation.

So what does this bill do? Well, in short, the bill will reduce the bureaucratic process for placing children in foster care with relatives, when possible, and is in the best interest of the child.

Now, this just makes common sense. Last year alone, there were almost a half million children in foster care, more than 16,000 children in my home State of Pennsylvania alone. Now, there are countless family members of these foster children who are not only willing, but they are ready to have these children placed in their homes when one of their relatives can't take care of them.

As a matter of good public policy, we should be making the placement process much easier for family members, not more difficult, because it is often in the best interest of the child.

Studies show that placing foster children with relatives solves many of the problems children face when being placed into foster care; moreover, it improves the outcomes for these children. Children are more likely to succeed when they can stay with a family member of their own and someone they are already familiar with and know. Children placed with relatives tend to spend less time in foster care and also experience much more stability.

The problem is that, while current law allows States to waive certain licensing standards when placing children with relatives, many States have been slow to implement the law. One of the purported reasons is that caseworkers are slow or they simply don't know how to place children with relatives because of a lack of training on their part.

Today, caseworkers may not be adequately trained regarding their ability to waive certain standards when licensing relatives. This has resulted in delays in placing children with relatives.

And when these children are already facing a tremendous amount of turmoil and uncertainty in their lives, we shouldn't be tying them up in bureaucratic red tape. We need to do more to place these children with a loving family member whenever possible.

Now, how do we do that? Well, Representative SMUCKER's bill, H.R. 2866, will help remedy this problem by making our foster care system more family