



## **H.R. 9076, *Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act* Rep. LaHood (R-IL) and Rep. Davis (D-IL)**

### **Background:**

- Title IV-B of the Social Security Act is a key child welfare program that provides federal resources to states, tribes, and territories for family preservation and to promote the safety, permanence, and well-being of children in foster care. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, **369,000 American children were in foster care and 19,000 youth aged-out of foster care.**
- The program also provides funding for the Court Improvement Program to support child welfare legal proceedings, and Regional Partnership Grants to address parental substance use disorder as cause of child removal in order to help keep families united.

### **Issue:**

- **Title IV-B's authorization expired in FY 2021 and the program has remained unchanged since 2008.** Reauthorization presents an opportunity to strengthen accountability and ensure federal dollars are meeting the needs of children and families in the child protective services system.
- There is a **need to streamline funding and target taxpayer dollars on prevention strategies** that mitigate trauma for children and avoid the substantial economic costs of long-term foster care, which is estimated to range from **\$22,000 to \$50,000** annually.

### **The bipartisan *Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act*:**

- **Reauthorizes Title IV-B for five years and makes reforms to modernize the program.** Saves taxpayer dollars by supporting early intervention to help families stay united and reducing duplication in the child welfare system. Uses savings from H.R. 7906, the "Strengthening State and Tribal Child Enforcement Act" to make targeted investments that will:
  - **Reduce administrative burden** by requiring HHS to reduce paperwork and data reporting for state agencies and caseworkers by at least 15%.
  - **Improve access for Indian tribes** by streamlining access to funding, as well as improving state compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.
  - **Support expansion of evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect** and ensures children are not separated from parents solely due to poverty-related neglect.
  - **Address the caseworker crises** by ensuring caseworkers have access to training and support to improve retention and recruitment.
  - **Strengthen support systems for the 2.5 million grandparents and relatives** providing kinship care for children who would otherwise enter foster care.
  - **Improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care** by including individuals with lived experience (formerly in foster care) in state service planning and ensuring youth have access to mental health services.
  - **Support post-adoption services** by requiring HHS to review post-adoption supports provided under Title IV-B and identify opportunities for strengthening them.