



H.R. 7529, *Fresh Starts for Foster Youth Act* Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL)

Background:

- The John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (“Chafee”) supports current and former foster youth, age 14 to 21, as they transition to independence in adulthood.
- Youth who “**age out**” of the child welfare system **often lack permanent connections to family and face significant challenges** that can make their transition to adulthood difficult.
- For example, many foster youth are denied leases when trying to obtain housing or may need assistance in securing guardianship or custody of their younger siblings still in foster care.
- Foster youth are also much more likely to be **victims of identity theft and credit fraud**. A 2024 report by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General found that foster youth are “vulnerable to identity theft,” which can impact ability to obtain employment or access student and auto loans.

H.R. 7529, *Fresh Starts for Foster Youth Act*:

- Clarifies that Chafee is intended to support access to **legal counseling**.
- Adds a state plan requirement to ensure states take into consideration **legal issues that may impact a youth’s transition into adulthood** as part of their case planning, as well as efforts required to address such issues, including with respect to State court records.
- Legal issues may include areas affecting housing, education, entry into employment, family connections, legal recognition of family relationships, and matters relating to custody and permanency.

Endorsed By: More than 150 national, state, and local organizations including Journey to Success, Think of Us, iFoster, Child Welfare League of America, FosterClub, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Foster Youth Institute, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, American Public Human Services Association, and National Association of Counties.