



H.R. 7995, *Chafee Opportunities for New Networks and Existing Connection Trust (CONNECT) Act*
Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), Rep. Mike Carey (R-OH)

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.
- Finding permanency through reunification with parents, adoption, guardianship, or kinship care is often the goal for foster youth. Yet nearly **16,000 foster youth “age out”** of the child welfare system with no permanent connections to family and **only 60% of foster youth achieve their permanency goals**.
- Foster youth have expressed the importance of developing and sustaining relationships with adults as a key component to complement services offered by Chafee. For example, at a Work and Welfare Subcommittee hearing, a foster youth shared how prioritizing relationships with adults and peers “sets [them] up for success” as they transition into adulthood.

H.R. 7995, *Chafee Opportunities for New Networks and Existing Connection Trust (CONNECT) Act*:

- Adds two new purposes to the Chafee program to prioritize the importance of long-term relationships to future success:
 - The first purpose focuses on helping foster youth **develop and maintain supportive relationships** with adults such as kin, mentors, and peers to build lifelong relationships and support networks.
 - The second purpose clarifies Chafee is intended to help foster youth **develop and plan their own permanency goals** and provide youth with written information about services available to them, including mentoring and peer support.
- Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to issue **implementation guidance** to states and tribes that provides examples and best practices to facilitate helping foster youth develop permanent connections in adulthood.

Endorsed By: More than 150 national, state, and local organizations including Journey to Success, Think of Us, iFoster, Child Welfare League of America, and FosterClub.