

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend the John H. Chaffee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to increase the maximum education and training voucher amount, provide greater support for foster youth pursuing postsecondary education, and expand education and workforce training opportunities for youth who have experienced foster care, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the John H. Chaffee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood to increase the maximum education and training voucher amount, provide greater support for foster youth pursuing postsecondary education, and expand education and workforce training opportunities for youth who have experienced foster care, and for other purposes.

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 “Foster Youth Edu-
5 cation and Workforce Opportunity Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**
2 **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WHO**
3 **HAVE EXPERIENCED FOSTER CARE.**

4 Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
5 677) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)(5) by striking “aged out
7 of foster care” and inserting “experienced foster
8 care at age 14 or older”;

9 (2) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “age out of
10 foster care” and inserting “experience foster care at
11 age 14 or older”;

12 (3) in each of subsections (a)(6) and (i)(2), by
13 striking “16” and inserting “14”; and

14 (4) in subsection (i)—

15 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “in no
16 event may a youth participate in the program
17 for more than 5 years (whether or not consecu-
18 tive)” and inserting “may not allow a youth to
19 participate in the voucher program for more
20 than 5 years (or, in the case of a youth who
21 was involved in a remedial education activity re-
22 ferred to in paragraph (4)(B)(iii), for more
23 than 6 years), whether or not consecutive”;

24 (B) in paragraph (4)—

25 (i) by amending subparagraph (A) to
26 read as follows:

1 “(A) may be available for the cost of at-
2 tendance—

3 “(i) at an institution of higher edu-
4 cation, as defined in section 102 of the
5 Higher Education Act of 1965, including a
6 community college or postsecondary voca-
7 tional institution; or

8 “(ii) at a short-term training program
9 that is eligible for the Workforce Pell pro-
10 gram under section 401(k) of the Higher
11 Education Act of 1965, as described in
12 section 481(b)(3) of such Act, as added by
13 section 83002(b) of Public Law 119–21;”;

14 (ii) by redesignating subparagraph
15 (B) as subparagraph (C);

16 (iii) by inserting after subparagraph
17 (A), as so amended, the following:

18 “(B) may be available for costs—

19 “(i) associated with participation in a
20 registered apprenticeship program;

21 “(ii) to obtain a general equivalency
22 degree; or

23 “(iii) to receive remedial education;
24 and”; and

1 (iv) in subparagraph (C), as so reded-
2 ignated, by striking “that Act” and insert-
3 ing “the Higher Education Act of 1965”;
4 and
5 (C) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(7) In this section—

7 “(A) the term ‘remedial education’ means
8 education or skill training needed to support
9 obtaining a high school diploma or qualifying
10 for postsecondary education, training, or a reg-
11 istered apprenticeship that is—

12 “(i) not provided by the local edu-
13 cational agency of the student or another
14 free local, State, or Federal program; and

15 “(ii) is provided by an instructor with
16 credentials relevant to the subject area of
17 instruction, as determined by the State;
18 and

19 “(B) the term ‘registered apprenticeship’
20 means an apprenticeship program registered ei-
21 ther by a State apprenticeship agency recog-
22 nized by the Secretary of Labor or the Sec-
23 retary of Labor pursuant to the Act of August
24 16, 1937 (commonly known as the ‘National

1 Apprenticeship Act’; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663;
2 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.)”.

3 **SEC. 3. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
4 **VOUCHER AMOUNT AND PROVISION OF**
5 **GREATER SUPPORT FOR FOSTER YOUTH**
6 **PURSUING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i) of the Social Secu-
8 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)), as amended by section 2, is
9 amended—

10 (1) in paragraph (3)—

11 (A) by striking “training program” and in-
12 serting “training program (except that the
13 State may establish a grace period to allow a
14 youth to continue participation in activities de-
15 scribed in paragraph (4)(A), after an assess-
16 ment and consultation with the youth, if the
17 State determines that reasonable circumstances
18 warrant the grace period),”; and

19 (B) by striking “that program” and insert-
20 ing “that education or training program”; and

21 (2) in paragraph (4)(C), by striking “\$5,000”
22 and inserting “\$12,000”.

23 (b) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary of Health and
24 Human Services, in consultation with youth who have ex-
25 perience foster care, shall develop and issue model guid-

1 ance to States and jurisdictions receiving allotments under
2 section 477(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
3 677(c)) for implementation of the amendment made by
4 subsection (a)(1).

5 **SEC. 4. IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND YOUTH AWARE-**
6 **NESS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCH-**
7 **ERS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i) of the Social Secu-
9 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)), as amended by sections 2 and
10 3, is amended by adding at the end the following:

11 “(8) The State shall make reasonable efforts to
12 ensure that eligible youth are aware of potential ben-
13 efits provided under this subsection, including by co-
14 ordinating with programs funded under subsection
15 (h)(1).

16 “(9) The program shall include a simplified,
17 user-tested, and standard form for youth to use to
18 apply for vouchers under the program, using stand-
19 ard terminology, that is easily accessible and avail-
20 able electronically.

21 “(10) The State may use funds otherwise avail-
22 able under this subsection to assist eligible youth in
23 overcoming transportation barriers that limit access
24 to postsecondary education, workforce training, reg-
25 istered apprenticeships, or employment.”.

1 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Section 477(d)(1) of such Act
2 (42 U.S.C. 677(d)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

3 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A State to which an
4 amount is paid from its allotment under subsection
5 (c)(1) may use the amount in any manner that is
6 reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of
7 this section, including outreach related to subsection
8 (i)(8). A State to which an amount is paid from its
9 allotment under subsection (c)(3) may use the
10 amount for any purpose related to the program de-
11 scribed in subsection (i)(8).”.

12 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

13 The amendments made by this Act shall take effect
14 on the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment
15 of this Act.