

**Family First Prevention Services Act  
PCYA Summary and Review  
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February 19, 2018**

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## **Bill Information**

### **Cited as:**

H.R.1892 - Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 115th Congress (2017-2018)

02/09/2018 Became Public Law No: 115-123

Link to Law: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1892/actions>

<b>Sponsor:</b>	<a href="#">Rep. Larson, John B. [D-CT-1]</a> (Introduced 04/04/2017)
<b>Committees:</b>	House - Judiciary   Senate - Judiciary
<b>Committee Reports:</b>	<a href="#">H. Rept. 115-119</a>
<b>Latest Action:</b>	02/09/2018 Became Public Law No: 115-123. ( <a href="#">All Actions</a> )
<b>Roll Call Votes:</b>	There have been <a href="#">6 roll call votes</a>
<b>Notes:</b>	Continuing appropriations through 3/23/2018.

### *Family First Prevention Services Act (Summary for Congressional Site)*

The division modifies various provisions related to foster care and adoption. Specifically, the division:

- revises funding and eligibility requirements with respect to foster-care prevention services and programs;
- limits federal funding for placements that are not in foster-family homes;
- provides for grants to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality foster families;
- provides for social-impact partnerships;
- extends and otherwise revises various other programs; and
- modifies provisions related to foster-care maintenance payments, evidence-based kinship navigator programs, family-reunification services, interstate case processing, regional-partnership grants, qualified residential-treatment programs, records checks, adoption assistance, child-support enforcement, and prison-data reporting.

## History

Date	Actions Overview
02/09/2018	Became Public Law No: 115-123.
02/09/2018	Signed by President.
02/09/2018	Presented to President.
02/09/2018	Resolving differences -- House actions: On motion that the House agree to the Senate amendment to the House amendment To the Senate amendment Agreed to by recorded vote: 240 - 186 ( <a href="#">Roll no. 69</a> ). (text of Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate Amendment: CR <a href="#">H1002-1066</a> )
02/09/2018	Resolving differences -- Senate actions: Senate concurred in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to <a href="#">H.R. 1892</a> with an amendment ( <a href="#">SA 1930</a> ) by Yea-Nay Vote. 71 - 28. <a href="#">Record Vote Number: 31</a> .
02/06/2018	Resolving differences -- House actions: On motion that the House agree with an amendment to the Senate amendment Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: 245 - 182 ( <a href="#">Roll no. 60</a> ). (text of House amendment to Senate amendment: CR <a href="#">H834-888</a> )
11/28/2017	Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.
11/28/2017	Senate Committee on the Judiciary discharged by Unanimous Consent.
05/18/2017	Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 411 - 1 ( <a href="#">Roll no. 266</a> ).
05/15/2017	Reported by the Committee on Judiciary. <a href="#">H. Rept. 115-119</a> .
04/04/2017	Introduced in House

## Federal Costs Estimates

# **H.R. 5456, Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016**

June 21, 2016

Cost Estimate

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Ways and Means on June 15, 2016

H. R. 5456 would amend title IV of the Social Security Act to make various changes to the child welfare system. The bill would provide federal matching funds to states for services that would help children who otherwise might enter foster care remain safely in their homes and for programs to support families caring for the children of relatives. It also would eliminate federal matching funds for some payments for foster children placed in nonfamily settings and would delay for two and one-half years federal matching for payments to certain families who adopt infants and toddlers. Finally, H.R. 5456 would extend the authorizations of several programs that provide child welfare services through 2021.

CBO estimates that enacting this legislation would, on net, reduce direct spending by \$66 million over the 2017-2026 period. Because enacting the legislation would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Enacting H.R. 5456 would not affect revenues.

CBO also estimates that implementing the bill would increase discretionary costs by \$2.5 billion over the 2017-2021 period, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5456 would increase net direct spending and on-budget deficits by more than \$5 billion in at least one of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

# **Summary of Bill**

**(Special thanks to PCCYFS for Sharing Materials)**

## **Part I- Prevention Activities**

- Allows Title IV-E funds to be used to fund services meant to keep children out of foster care, for up to 12 months. Must be:
- “(A) MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT SERVICES.—Mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician for not more than a 12-month period that begins on any date described in paragraph (3) with respect to the child.
- “(B) IN-HOME PARENT SKILL-BASED PROGRAMS.—In-home parent skill-based programs for not more than a 12-month period that begins on any date described in paragraph (3) with respect to the child and that include parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling.
  - Services must be trauma-informed and provided in accordance with "promising, supported, or well-supported practices (all defined terms)."
  - There will be increased costs due to need to have programs reviewed and certified as Promising, supported, or well-supported.
  - To be eligible, must be child who is a candidate for foster care.

## **Part II- SEC. 50721. ELIMINATION OF TIME LIMIT FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES WHILE IN FOSTER CARE AND PERMITTING TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES WHEN A CHILD RETURNS HOME FROM FOSTER CARE.**

## **Part III- SEC. 50731. REVIEWING AND IMPROVING LICENSING STANDARDS FOR PLACEMENT IN A RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILY HOME.**

- 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).

## **Part IV - Ensuring the Necessity of a Placement That is Not in a Foster Family Home. SEC. 50741. LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR PLACEMENTS THAT ARE NOT IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES.**

### **LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION**

**IN GENERAL.**—Beginning with the third week for which foster care maintenance payments are made under this section on behalf of a child placed in a child-care institution, no Federal payment shall be made to the State under section 474(a)(1) for amounts expended for foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child unless—

“(A) the child is placed in a child-care institution that is a setting specified in paragraph (2) (or is placed in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility consistent with subsection (j)); and

“(B) in the case of a child placed in a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in paragraph (4)), the requirements specified in paragraph (3) and section 475A(c) are met.

### **Only Eligible Placement Settings for Congregate**

“(A) A qualified residential treatment program (as defined in paragraph (4)).

“(B) A setting specializing in providing prenatal, post-partum, or parenting supports for youth.

“(C) In the case of a child who has attained 18 years of age, a supervised setting in which the child is living independently.

“(D) A setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims, in accordance with section 471(a)(9)(C).

**QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.**—For purposes of this part, the term ‘qualified residential treatment program’ means a program that—

“(A) has a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the needs, including clinical needs as appropriate, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances and, with respect to a child, is able to implement the treatment identified for the child by the assessment of the child required under section 475A(c);

“(B) subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), has registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff who—

“(i) provide care within the scope of their practice as defined by State law;

“(ii) are on-site according to the treatment model referred to in subparagraph (A); and

“(iii) are available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week;

“(C) to extent appropriate, and in accordance with the child’s best interests, facilitates participation of family members in the child’s treatment program;

“(D) facilitates outreach to the family members of the child, including siblings, documents how the outreach is made (including contact information), and maintains contact information for any known biological family and fictive kin of the child;

“(E) documents how family members are integrated into the treatment process for the child, including post-discharge, and how sibling connections are maintained;

“(F) provides discharge planning and family-based aftercare support for at least 6 months post-discharge; and

“(G) is licensed in accordance with section 471(a)(10) and is accredited by any of the following independent, not-for-profit organizations:

“(i) The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

“(ii) The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

“(iii) The Council on Accreditation (COA).

“(iv) Any other independent, not-for-profit accrediting organization approved by the Secretary.

**TRAINING FOR STATE JUDGES, ATTORNEYS, AND OTHER LEGAL PERSONNEL IN CHILD WELFARE CASES.**—Section 438(b)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(b)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting “shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home,” after “with respect to the child,”.

## **SEC. 50742. ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE NEED FOR PLACEMENT IN A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.**

**ASSESSMENT, DOCUMENTATION, AND JUDICIAL DETERMINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PLACEMENT IN A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.**—In the case of any child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in section 472(k)(4)), the following requirements shall apply for purposes of approving the case plan for the child and the case system review procedure for the child:

“(1) (A) **Within 30 days of the start of each placement** in such a setting, a qualified individual (as defined in subparagraph (D)) **shall**—

“(i) assess the strengths and needs of the child using an age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, functional assessment tool approved by the Secretary;

“(ii) determine whether the needs of the child can be met with family members or through placement in a foster family home or, if not, which setting from among the settings specified in section 472(k)(2) would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child; and

“(iii) develop a list of child-specific short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals.

“(B) (i) The State shall assemble a family and permanency team for the child in accordance with the requirements of clauses (ii) and (iii). The qualified individual conducting the assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall work in conjunction with the family of, and permanency team for, the child while conducting and making the assessment.

“(ii) The family and permanency team shall consist of all appropriate biological family members, relative, and fictive kin of the child, as well as, as appropriate, professionals who are a resource to the family of the child, such as teachers, medical or mental health providers who have treated the child, or clergy. In the case of a child who has attained age 14, the family and permanency team shall include the members of the permanency planning team for the child that are selected by the child in accordance with section 475(5)(C)(iv).

“(iii) **The State shall document in the child's case plan**—(Additional documentation requirements)

“(I) the reasonable and good faith effort of the State to identify and include all the individuals described in clause (ii) on the child's family and permanency team;

“(II) all contact information for members of the family and permanency team, as well as contact information for other family members and fictive kin who are not part of the family and permanency team;

“(III) evidence that meetings of the family and permanency team, including meetings relating to the assessment required under subparagraph (A), are held at a time and place convenient for family;

“(IV) if reunification is the goal, evidence demonstrating that the parent from whom the child was removed provided input on the members of the family and permanency team;

“(V) evidence that the assessment required under subparagraph (A) is determined in conjunction with the family and permanency team;

“(VI) the placement preferences of the family and permanency team relative to the assessment that recognizes children should be placed with their siblings unless there is a finding by the court that such placement is contrary to their best interest; and

“(VII) if the placement preferences of the family and permanency team and child are not the placement setting recommended by the qualified individual conducting the assessment under subparagraph (A), the reasons why the preferences of the team and of the child were not recommended.

‘**qualified individual**’ means a trained professional or licensed clinician who is not an employee of the State agency and who is not connected to, or affiliated with, any placement setting in which children are placed by the State.

- After two weeks in placement, only "Specified Settings" are eligible for federal foster care maintenance payments. Such placements must also be approved by a court within 60 days.
- The mandatory change takes effect October 1, 2019. States may opt to delay the effective date for up to two years, which would also delay funding for prevention services for the same length of time.

#### **Part V - Continuing Support for Foster Family Services**

- Provides a one-time appropriation in FY2018 (available through FY2022) of \$8 million in competitive grants to states or tribes to support recruitment and retention of high-quality foster families.
- Reauthorizes the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, and Court Improvement Programs through each of FY2017-FY2021.
- Allows states to use John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds for youth up to 23 years of age who have aged out of foster care, as long as the state has elected to extend federal title IV-E funds to children up to age 21 or comparable assistance with other non-title IV-E funds.
- Extends access to education and training vouchers to 26 years old (no more than five years total).

#### **Part VI - Continuing Incentives to States to Promote Adoption and Legal Guardianship**

- Continues states' eligibility to earn incentive payments for adoption and legal guardianship programs each year from FY2016 to FY2020 and extends annual discretionary funding authority, at the current law annual level of \$43 million, for each year from FY2017 to FY2021.

#### **Part VII - Technical Corrections**

- Rewrites provisions to require HHS to develop regulations concerning the categories of information that state child welfare agencies must be able to exchange with another state agency as well as federal reporting and data exchange required under applicable federal law.
- Clarifies that a state must describe in its title IV-B Child Welfare Services plan what it is doing to address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under five years of age who receive benefits or services under the title IV-B programs or the title IV-E foster care and permanency program (not just children in foster care).

#### **Part VIII- Ensuring States Reinvest Savings Resulting from Increase in Adoption Assistance**

- Phases in title IV-E adoption assistance, part of Fostering Connections, by delaying assistance without meeting an income test for children with special needs who do not reach their second birthday in the fiscal year their adoption assistance agreement is signed; would require use of an income test for an additional six and a half years. Beginning on January 1, 2018, and through June 30, 2024, the income test would need to be applied for any child who is under

the age of two when the adoption assistance agreement is signed, provided the child will not reach his/her second birthday before the last day of the fiscal year in which that agreement is signed. As of July 1, 2024, no income test would be used for purposes of determining a child's eligibility for Title IV-E adoption assistance, regardless of the child's age.

- Requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study whether states are complying with the requirement that they spend, for child welfare purposes, an amount equal to the amount of savings (if any) resulting from phasing out the income eligibility requirements for federal adoption assistance.

In addition to passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act, the Continuing Resolution provided for:

- A five-year extension of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program at \$400 million;
- A ten-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and
- An extension of various health "extenders," including Community Health Centers.

There are also commitments for specific spending increases that must still be enacted through the Appropriations process, including:

- An increase of \$5.8 billion for child care over two years; and
- Increased funding to address the opioid crisis at \$6 billion over two years and allocated between various areas.

## **More in-depth Analysis for Chronicles of Social Change**

The Chronicle of Social Change has provided a detailed summary of the law, including questions and answers ([Cliffs Notes: Part One](#)), which are reprinted below:

### **Prevention Services**

A central feature of the bill is that states will now be able to use funds derived from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act - the entitlement that pays for child welfare - for "time-limited" services aimed at preventing the use of foster care in maltreatment cases. Currently, IV-E is only allowable for spending on foster care placements and for assistance to adoptive families.

### **What types of services are we talking about?**

There are three areas of services that states can spend this money on:

- Services to address mental health challenges.
- Substance abuse treatment.
- In-home parent skill-based programs.

### **Who is eligible for these new services?**

There are two groups:

- Parents or relatives caring for children who are "candidates for foster care"
- Youth in foster care who are pregnant or already parents.

### **What makes a child a "candidate for foster care?"**

A child who would have to enter care but doesn't "as long as" Family First Act services are made available.

### **Does this only apply to birth parents?**

No. The candidate status applies to a child whose adoption or guardianship status would be disrupted or dissolved without these services.

### **So a worker just says, "You're a candidate for foster care," and then the tap turns on?**

Not exactly. There needs to be a formal prevention plan in place for foster care candidates, and that includes:

- Identifying a strategy that allows a kid to stay at home, live with a kin caregiver temporarily, or "live permanently" with a kin caregiver.
- A list of services associated with that strategy.

For pregnant teens, a strategy must have a list of services for the youth, and the "foster care prevention" strategy for any child born to them.

The law also invites the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to add further requirements to the prevention plan process, so this could change.

### **What does "time-limited" mean, how long do states have?**

An agency can spend IV-E on prevention services for 12 months. The clock starts the day a child is identified in a "prevention plan" as a candidate for foster care, or when they are listed on a prevention plan as being pregnant or parenting.

### **Can this new program be used for any services that address mental health, substance abuse or parenting challenges?**

No. Any allowable service must check a few boxes off in terms of efficacy.

First, there are general practice requirements. There must be a manual specifying the components of it. The preponderance of outcome measurements for it must suggest a clear benefit, and there can't be any "case data suggesting a risk of harm that probably was caused by the treatment and that was severe or frequent."

Second, any services must meet one of the following three thresholds:

*Promising Practice:* "Superior to" a comparable practice using conventional standards of statistical significance. This must be borne out in an independently reviewed study that used "some form of control" group (a placebo group, a waitlist, or a group of untreated people).

*Supported Practice:* Same, but has a random-controlled trial or a "rigorous" quasi-experimental design. Must demonstrate sustained effects for six months beyond end of treatment.

*Well-Supported Practice:* A sustained effect for "at least one year beyond the end of treatment."

HHS will develop the formal standards for determining which services count under these three classes. The deadline set in Family First for that is October of this year. To get a sense of what the likely programs and models are, though, you can check out the [\*\*California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare\*\*](#), which is the template for this section of the law.

Of the 433 programs cataloged in the California child welfare clearinghouse, 210 have achieved one of these three ratings.

### **How much is the federal government kicking in?**

Fifty percent from 2019 until 2026. After that, the federal match for time-limited services is pegged to the federal [\*\*medical assistance percentage\*\*](#).

For most states, this will mean more federal participation, especially in states with the highest concentration of low-income families. But there is a caveat: by 2026, half of state expenditures in this area must go toward "well-supported practices," the highest ranking of the three classes. Very few services have this status under the California Clearinghouse, so the hope is that this program will help drive the evidence and evaluation of more strategies and models.

### **Do states *have* to provide these services using IV-E funds?**

Nope. The law makes several references to states "electing" to participate. For states that do, though, it must become a component of their overall IV-E state plan.

There is a long list of requirements for this plan, but in a nutshell: states must show in writing that they have a system for choosing, implementing and evaluating the time-limited services, and that caseworkers are trained to administer them.

While Family First money cannot be used to pay for training kinship caregivers or caseworkers, states can get a 50 percent match for training and work related to developing the state plan.

Since process of evaluating these programs is required in the state plan, it appears that the cost of these evaluations will be split 50-50 between the states and the federal government.

**Some or all states are probably already spending money on this right now.**

**Can this money replace that funding?**

They can replace *how* those services were funded before, but not *how much* it was funded.

Under the maintenance of effort rules for Family First, a state must spend on "foster care prevention" what it spent in fiscal year 2014, 2015 or 2016 (whichever is favorable to the state).

The definition of "foster care prevention," for the purposes of this law, is funds spend on preventing the need for foster care under state or local programs, or under other federal funding streams such as the Social Services Block Grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. States will have to submit and be able to defend their maintenance of effort baselines against review by HHS.

**There's an income test under Title IV-E still for foster care maintenance payments. Is that true for the time-limited prevention services?**

Nope. These can be administered in the case of any family where the "foster care candidate" status is valid.

**Sometimes relatives will need to take a child in while the parents get help.**

**Does Family First provide financial assistance to these relatives?**

It does not. There was assistance written into earlier versions of the law for kin, but as the bill was negotiated and pared down cost-wise, those provisions did not survive. The act does offer to federally match state spending on kinship navigator programs, which are one-stop shops to assist kinship caregivers.

**So what happens if the time-limited services don't work?**

If the child is staying with relatives, and the prevention services have not succeeded, the likely first preference of the system will be to keep the child with the relative on a longer-term basis. This could occur informally; the relative could become a licensed foster parent or could either adopt the child or enter into a guardianship agreement.

**One concern** some had about Family First is that there is a great fiscal incentive for the state to steer things toward an informal custody arrangement. If the child enters foster care, that will cost money, and so would a guardianship or adoption that followed.

This means that if a parent fails to get to the point where a system is okay returning the child, financial help for the kinship support network of that child is contingent on him or her entering foster care.

Family First does essentially guarantee that if the system places the child in the foster care custody of a relative, the state can draw in federal money to help with those foster care payments, as long as the birth parent's income would have originally qualified the child for federal reimbursement.

**What about programs that allow a child to live with a parent while they get residential treatment for substance abuse?**

If a child is reimbursable under the IV-E foster care income tests, then a state can seek IV-E reimbursement for a child placed in such a facility. There must be a formal recommendation made for the placement, presumably by a judge, and the facility must provide parenting and counseling sessions, in addition to rehab.

**Is the federal government going to help states gear up for this?**

Two avenues on that front. First, the law instructs HHS to "provide technical assistance" and disseminate best practices, including on how to do a rigorous evaluation of time-limited services.

Second, either housed at or paid for by HHS, there will be a clearinghouse to evaluate and highlight the data and outcomes associated with services in this space. This will include at the very least information on if a program has been shown to reduce maltreatment, and if it has reduced the likelihood of foster care placement.

HHS will also be on the hook to report to the committees with jurisdiction on Family First: The Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means. This requirement includes the nebulous "periodic reports" caveat. Whenever those reports come out, they will be public.

**When does all this start?**

A: Mostly October of 2018. Plans for HHS to develop technical assistance and a clearinghouse are effective already.

**As *The Chronicle of Social Change*** reported in multiple stories last week, the Family First Prevention Services Act **has become law**. It includes the biggest change to the structure of federal child welfare finance since the establishment of the Title IV-E entitlement in 1980.

So what is actually in this thing? *Youth Services Insider* pored over all 103 pages of the law. Here is part two of our three-part breakdown of its two major sections and all of the additional provisions inside Family First.

## **LIMITING CONGREGATE CARE**

If a child is placed by an agency into a “child care institution,” no IV-E foster care payment can be made beginning with the third week of that placement. States can still seek reimbursement for the administrative expenditures related to a child’s case though.

### **What is a “child care institution?”**

The law basically defines a “family foster home” as having six or less kids, with some notable exceptions made to keep siblings together and a few other reasons.

A “child care institution” includes any private child-serving institution, and any public child-serving institution that holds 25 or less children. Federal law already precludes IV-E reimbursement for placements larger than that.

One important carve-out here is that the law exempts from this juvenile facilities involved in pre- or post-adjudication services. On the flipside, though, the law requires the state not to “enact or advance policies” that would increase the population of the juvenile justice system.

Translation: No arresting youth for the purpose of being able to house them in group settings. The law also mandates a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on the matter, due by the year 2025.

### **So the federal government won’t pay for congregate care after two weeks under any circumstances?**

Not exactly. There are several very significant exceptions to this new rule. The following placements would be eligible for payments beyond two weeks:

- A setting for prenatal, postpartum or parenting supports for teen moms.
- A supervised setting for a child 18 or older. This allows states to continue to receive support for extended foster care, a key provision of Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act that about half the states have opted into.
- “High quality residential services” for youth who have been victims of trafficking or at risk of it. It will be of interest how HHS further regulates this in regard to the terms “high quality” and “at risk.”
- A “qualified residential treatment program,” or QRTP.

## **Yet another acronym is born! What is QRTP?**

The law identifies several defining characteristics of such a setting:

- Licensed by at least one of three accreditors: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities; Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations; Council on Accreditation.
- Has a trauma-informed treatment model that includes service of clinical needs.
- Has registered or licensed nursing staff in accordance with the model, and that a nurse is on call at all times. Note: The original bill actually required a nurse or clinical staff on premises during all work/operating hours and on call at night.
- Is inclusive of family members in treatment plans and programs.
- Plans for at least a six-month window of support after discharge.

## **Can a state use a QRTP for the long haul with kids?**

Theoretically yes, but not without a review process. There is a 30-day window for an assessment that deems the placement necessary. After that, assessment of the continued need for the placement must be conducted every 60 days.

For really long-term stays – 12 months straight, or any 18 months – the actual head of the state agency must sign off.

The law also requires state IV-E plans to demonstrate “procedures and protocols” to ensure that foster youth are not inappropriately given mental health diagnoses that would make it easier to justify their placement in a QRTP.

HHS will have to do an evaluation by 2020 to determine best practices and trends on this subject.

## **How long do states have until these limits take effect?**

It could take until 2021 for these limits in some states.

The limitations on group care do not take effect for anyone until October 2019. But states can also apply to get a two-year delay on these limits. There is a caveat though: if a state delays on the congregate care limits, it precludes any reimbursement for the front-end prevention services provided in the law.

Surely, the authors intended that caveat to serve as an incentive against states seeking a delay on congregate care. But it’s worth noting that the opposite might occur: states that might have embraced the front-end cost-sharing, but are wary of

the congregate impact, might forgo the foster care prevention funds to lock in a delay.

The delay decision ability gives significant power to state agencies in states where the county child welfare agencies do a lot of the work. For example: In Pennsylvania, if Allegheny County really wants to tap into those front-end federal funds, it is out of luck for a while if Pennsylvania decides to seek a delay on congregate care.

Or in California, let's say Los Angeles really does not want the congregate care limits. If the state decides *not* to seek a delay, those limitations are coming a year or two sooner than the county wants.

CliffsNotes on Family First Act, Part Three: Adoption, Foster Home Recruitment, Reunification and More

[chronicleofsocialchange.org/finance-reform/cliffsnotes-family-first-act-part-three-adoption-foster-home-recruitmentreunification/29897](http://chronicleofsocialchange.org/finance-reform/cliffsnotes-family-first-act-part-three-adoption-foster-home-recruitmentreunification/29897)

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## **EVERYTHING ELSE**

The foster care prevention services and the limits on congregate care are the central reasons for this legislation. But there are several significant provisions that are included in the bill that became law.

**Adoption Assistance:** The law pays for the projected spending on foster care prevention services with definite cuts to spending on adoption assistance. Federal adoption assistance payments under Title IV-E used to be pegged to income tests in the same way as the IV-E foster care payments. So only children adopted from parents who were very poor carried a federal contribution; states had to provide the full subsidy for other children.

The Family First Act, first drafted by Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), became law this month. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, signed in 2008, set that income test to gradually expire by 2019. It

began with de-linking the income test for teens (a low percentage of the youth adopted from care) and worked backward to newborns and babies (the biggest portion of adoptees). The caveat was that states needed to spend the savings they reaped on helping adoptive families. This law freezes the de-link at 2-year-olds and delays it until the year 2024. In the meantime, the GAO will conduct a study to determine if states are using the money they save from adoption de-link on serving adoptive families.

**Adoption and Guardianship Incentives:** In 2014, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act reworked the federal adoption incentives program which rewards states for finalizing the adoptions of youth in foster care. That law shifted the program to include guardianships, place more emphasis on the adoption of older youth in foster care, and pegged the incentive calculations to more recent data. The Family First simply extends the incentive program to 2021.

**Reunification:** As Family First adds time-limited services under IV-E, it takes away time limits on services under the “reunification” section of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (Title IVB), the block grant for family preservation. There is a 15-month limit on the funds once a child enters foster care; that’s gone, now there is no limit on how long services can be provided during that stay. And now, the funds can also be used to continue supports for 15 months after the child returns home. It is unlikely to happen, but Promoting Safe and Stable Families would be vulnerable to any sequestration that’s prompted by the tax cut package that President Trump signed into law.

**Kinship Navigator Programs:** Currently, the federal government makes \$15 million in grants per year for “kinship navigator” programs under the Family Connections grants program, which was established by the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act. These programs serve as one-stop centers for assistance to relatives who are caring for children. The Family First Act offers an additional 50 percent match on any funds spent by a state for a kinship navigator program that has earned the promising/supported/well-supported status.

**Cross-State Placements:** By the year 2027, all states must move to an “electronic interstate case-processing system.” A \$5 million pot of money is available from 2018 to 2022 for states to apply to get assistance developing such a system. This emanates from bills in both chambers called the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

**Foster Home Licensing:** By October 2018, HHS must have model licensing standards for foster family homes. States will have to certify if its licensing is in accord with the model and explain why not. Acknowledge if states have waived

some standards for relatives. If HHS is looking for inspiration, it might look into the National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards, a document put together in 2014 by the American Bar Association, Generations United and the National Association for Regulatory Administration.

**Foster Home Recruitment and Retention:** Section 431 of the Social Security Act lays out the federal definitions of “family preservation services” and “family support services.” In both cases, most but not all of the defined options pertain to assisting birth families. Family support services does include the strengthening of families, including foster and adoptive ones. The Family First Act adds the “support and retention” of foster families as a new defined service. The bill also appears to free up a very small pot, \$8 million available through 2022, for recruitment and retention efforts. This fall, The Chronicle of Social Change produced a report finding that at least half of states had either lost foster home capacity, or had seen any gains outpaced by a rising number of youth in care. While some states have had recent success recruiting new homes, many others are struggling to move the needle despite dedicated efforts to do so. This is the issue that fits squarely in between the two major gambits of the Family First Act. If the front-end services succeed, that will lower the number of youth coming into foster care. And that will be necessary, because if the congregate care limitations work in reducing the use of such placements, those youth would presumably end up in foster homes.

**Plan for Prevention of Maltreatment Deaths:** Each state would be required to provide two things: A description of the steps the state is taking to compile complete and accurate information on maltreatment-related deaths, and a description of steps that the state is taking to implement a “plan to prevent the fatalities.” This notion was promulgated as part of the recommendations of the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, which produced its final report in 2016, and was included in Senate legislation introduced this fall after the Finance Committee concluded an investigation into foster care privatization.

**Chafee Independent Living:** The Chafee program offers \$140 million each year for states to offer independent living programs to youth who are aging out of foster care into adulthood. The eligibility threshold for participants is 21. For states that have extended foster care to include 18- to 21-year-olds – Ohio recently became the 25th state on that list – they can now extend eligibility through age 23.

**Chafee Education Training Vouchers (ETV):** This program provides \$45 million per year to states to assist youth aging out of care with college costs. The current age ceiling is 23, and Family First raises that to 26, with the rider that no single student can get a voucher for more than five years. This proposal was originally part of the bill back in 2014 that changed the adoption incentive program, but did not make the final version. As we wrote back then, there is some downside to this

shift since it appears to come without any increase in funding. Without a proportional increase in funds for ETV, the expansion implicitly instructs states to spread the funds over a larger number of students; perhaps thousands more in highly populous states. Not all states spend their entire ETV allotment, but many do. In California, there is routinely a wait-list for ETV grants already, and the state's process favored current recipients over new applicants. When this idea was first floated, California advocates told Youth Services Insider that it could cause real problems without more money. "If this does go into effect and a state like [California] continues to implement ETV along their current lines, we'll have even less freshmen and sophomores receiving funding," said Serita Cox, co-founder of iFoster, in a 2013 conversation with YSI. "And I would argue that if we want to meaningfully move the needle on those earning their bachelor's degree, having funds for those freshmen and sophomores is more important than a 26-year-old on their graduate degree."

Bill text

One Hundred Fifteenth Congress  
of the  
United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,  
the third day of January, two thousand and eighteen*

An Act

To amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

*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 “Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018”.

(The following is an excerpt of budget bill regarding Family First-Signed into law 2/9/18. Link to full Budget Bill is here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1892/text>)

**TITLE VII—FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT**  
**Subtitle A—Investing In Prevention And Supporting**  
**Families**

**SEC. 50701. SHORT TITLE.**

This subtitle may be cited as the “Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018”.

**SEC. 50702. PURPOSE.**

The purpose of this subtitle is to enable States to use Federal funds available under parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements through the provision of mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, in-home parent skill-based programs, and kinship navigator services.

**PART I—PREVENTION ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE IV—E**

**SEC. 50711. FOSTER CARE PREVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.**

(a) STATE OPTION.—Section 471 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “and” and all that follows through the semicolon and inserting “, adoption assistance in accordance with section 473, and, at the option of the State, services or programs specified in subsection (e)(1) of this section for children who are candidates for foster care or who are pregnant or parenting foster youth and the parents or kin caregivers of the children, in accordance with the requirements of that subsection;” and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(e) PREVENTION AND FAMILY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this subsection, the Secretary may make a payment to a State for providing the following services or programs for a child described in paragraph (2) and the parents or kin caregivers of the child when the need of the child, such a parent, or such a caregiver for the services or programs are directly related to the safety, permanence, or well-being of the child or to preventing the child from entering foster care:

“(A) MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT SERVICES.—Mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician for not more than a 12-month period that begins on any date described in paragraph (3) with respect to the child.

“(B) IN-HOME PARENT SKILL-BASED PROGRAMS.—In-home parent skill-based programs for not more than a 12-month period that begins on any date described in paragraph (3) with respect to the child and that include parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling.

“(2) CHILD DESCRIBED.—For purposes of paragraph (1), a child described in this paragraph is the following:

“(A) A child who is a candidate for foster care (as defined in section 475(13)) but can remain safely at home or in a kinship placement with receipt of services or programs specified in paragraph (1).

“(B) A child in foster care who is a pregnant or parenting foster youth.

“(3) DATE DESCRIBED.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the dates described in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) The date on which a child is identified in a prevention plan maintained under paragraph (4) as a child who is a candidate for foster care (as defined in section 475(13)).

“(B) The date on which a child is identified in a prevention plan maintained under paragraph (4) as a pregnant or parenting foster youth in need of services or programs specified in paragraph (1).

“(4) REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO PROVIDING SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.—Services and programs specified in paragraph (1) may be provided under this subsection only if specified in advance in the child’s prevention plan described in subparagraph (A) and the requirements in subparagraphs (B) through (E) are met:

“(A) PREVENTION PLAN.—The State maintains a written prevention plan for the child that meets the following requirements (as applicable):

“(i) CANDIDATES.—In the case of a child who is a candidate for foster care described in paragraph (2)(A), the prevention plan shall—

“(I) identify the foster care prevention strategy for the child so that the child may remain safely at home, live temporarily with a kin caregiver until reunification can be safely achieved, or live permanently with a kin caregiver;

“(II) list the services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of the child to ensure the success of that prevention strategy; and

“(III) comply with such other requirements as the Secretary shall establish.

“(ii) PREGNANT OR PARENTING FOSTER YOUTH.—In the case of a child who is a pregnant or parenting foster youth described in paragraph (2)(B), the prevention plan shall—

“(I) be included in the child's case plan required under section 475(1);

“(II) list the services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of the youth to ensure that the youth is prepared (in the case of a pregnant foster youth) or able (in the case of a parenting foster youth) to be a parent;

“(III) describe the foster care prevention strategy for any child born to the youth; and

“(IV) comply with such other requirements as the Secretary shall establish.

“(B) TRAUMA-INFORMED.—The services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of a child are provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and in accordance with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions to address trauma’s consequences and facilitate healing.

“(C) ONLY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROMISING, SUPPORTED, OR WELL-SUPPORTED PRACTICES PERMITTED.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Only State expenditures for services or programs specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1) that are provided in accordance with practices that meet the requirements specified in clause (ii) of this subparagraph and that meet the requirements specified in clause (iii), (iv), or (v), respectively, for being a promising, supported, or well-supported practice, shall be eligible for a Federal matching payment under section 474(a)(6)(A).

“(ii) GENERAL PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS.—The general practice requirements specified in this clause are the following:

“(I) The practice has a book, manual, or other available writings that specify the components of the practice protocol and describe how to administer the practice.

“(II) There is no empirical basis suggesting that, compared to its likely benefits, the practice constitutes a risk of harm to those receiving it.

“(III) If multiple outcome studies have been conducted, the overall weight of evidence supports the benefits of the practice.

“(IV) Outcome measures are reliable and valid, and are administrated consistently and accurately across all those receiving the practice.

“(V) There is no case data suggesting a risk of harm that was probably caused by the treatment and that was severe or frequent.

“(iii) PROMISING PRACTICE.—A practice shall be considered to be a ‘promising practice’ if the practice is superior to an appropriate comparison practice using conventional standards of statistical significance (in terms of demonstrated meaningful improvements in validated measures of important child and parent outcomes, such as mental health, substance abuse, and child safety and well-being), as established by the results or outcomes of at least one study that—

“(I) was rated by an independent systematic review for the quality of the study design and execution and determined to be well-designed and well-executed; and

“(II) utilized some form of control (such as an untreated group, a placebo group, or a wait list study).

“(iv) SUPPORTED PRACTICE.—A practice shall be considered to be a ‘supported practice’ if—

“(I) the practice is superior to an appropriate comparison practice using conventional standards of statistical significance (in terms of demonstrated meaningful improvements in validated measures of important child and parent outcomes, such as mental health, substance abuse, and child safety and well-being), as established by the results or outcomes of at least one study that—

“(aa) was rated by an independent systematic review for the quality of the study design and execution and determined to be well-designed and well-executed;

“(bb) was a rigorous random-controlled trial (or, if not available, a study using a rigorous quasi-experimental research design); and

“(cc) was carried out in a usual care or practice setting; and

“(II) the study described in subclause (I) established that the practice has a sustained effect (when compared to a control group) for at least 6 months beyond the end of the treatment.

“(v) WELL-SUPPORTED PRACTICE.—A practice shall be considered to be a ‘well-supported practice’ if—

“(I) the practice is superior to an appropriate comparison practice using conventional standards of statistical significance (in terms of demonstrated meaningful improvements in validated measures of important child and parent outcomes, such as mental health, substance abuse, and child safety and well-being), as established by the results or outcomes of at least two studies that—

“(aa) were rated by an independent systematic review for the quality of the study design and execution and determined to be well-designed and well-executed;

“(bb) were rigorous random-controlled trials (or, if not available, studies using a rigorous quasi-experimental research design); and

“(cc) were carried out in a usual care or practice setting; and

“(II) at least one of the studies described in subclause (I) established that the practice has a sustained effect (when compared to a control group) for at least 1 year beyond the end of treatment.

“(D) GUIDANCE ON PRACTICES CRITERIA AND PRE-APPROVED SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary shall issue guidance to States regarding the practices criteria required for services or programs to satisfy the requirements of subparagraph (C). The guidance shall include a pre-approved list of services and programs that satisfy the requirements.

“(ii) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall issue updates to the guidance required by clause (i) as often as the Secretary determines necessary.

“(E) OUTCOME ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING.—The State shall collect and report to the Secretary the following information with respect to each child for whom, or on whose behalf mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services or in-home parent skill-based programs are provided during a 12-month period beginning on the date the child is determined by the State to be a child described in paragraph (2):

“(i) The specific services or programs provided and the total expenditures for each of the services or programs.

“(ii) The duration of the services or programs provided.

“(iii) In the case of a child described in paragraph (2)(A), the child’s placement status at the beginning, and at the end, of the 1-year period, respectively, and whether the child entered foster care within 2 years after being determined a candidate for foster care.

“(5) STATE PLAN COMPONENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A State electing to provide services or programs specified in paragraph (1) shall submit as part of the State plan required by subsection (a) a prevention services and programs plan component that meets the requirements of subparagraph (B).

“(B) PREVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS PLAN COMPONENT.—In order to meet the requirements of this subparagraph, a prevention services and programs plan component, with respect to each 5-year period for which the plan component is in operation in the State, shall include the following:

“(i) How providing services and programs specified in paragraph (1) is expected to improve specific outcomes for children and families.

“(ii) How the State will monitor and oversee the safety of children who receive services and programs specified in paragraph (1), including through periodic risk assessments throughout the period in which the services and programs are provided on behalf of a child and reexamination of the prevention plan maintained for the child under paragraph (4) for the provision of the services or programs if the State determines the risk of the child entering foster care remains high despite the provision of the services or programs.

“(iii) With respect to the services and programs specified in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1), information on the specific promising, supported, or well-supported practices the State plans to use to provide the services or programs, including a description of—

“(I) the services or programs and whether the practices used are promising, supported, or well-supported;

“(II) how the State plans to implement the services or programs, including how implementation of the services or programs will be continuously monitored to ensure fidelity to the practice model and to determine outcomes achieved and how information learned from the monitoring will be used to refine and improve practices;

“(III) how the State selected the services or programs;

“(IV) the target population for the services or programs; and

“(V) how each service or program provided will be evaluated through a well-designed and rigorous process, which may consist of an ongoing, cross-site evaluation approved by the Secretary.

“(iv) A description of the consultation that the State agencies responsible for administering the State plans under this part and part B engage in with other State agencies responsible for administering health programs, including mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, and with other public and private agencies with experience in administering child and family services, including community-based organizations, in order to foster a continuum of care for children described in paragraph (2) and their parents or kin caregivers.

“(v) A description of how the State shall assess children and their parents or kin caregivers to determine eligibility for services or programs specified in paragraph (1).

“(vi) A description of how the services or programs specified in paragraph (1) that are provided for or on behalf of a child and the parents or kin caregivers of the child will be coordinated with other child and family services provided to the child and the parents or kin caregivers of the child under the State plans in effect under subparts 1 and 2 of part B.

“(vii) Descriptions of steps the State is taking to support and enhance a competent, skilled, and professional child welfare workforce to deliver trauma-informed and evidence-based services, including—

“(I) ensuring that staff is qualified to provide services or programs that are consistent with the promising, supported, or well-supported practice models selected; and

“(II) developing appropriate prevention plans, and conducting the risk assessments required under clause (iii).

“(viii) A description of how the State will provide training and support for caseworkers in assessing what children and their families need, connecting to the families served, knowing how to access and deliver the needed trauma-informed and evidence-based services, and overseeing and evaluating the continuing appropriateness of the services.

“(ix) A description of how caseload size and type for prevention caseworkers will be determined, managed, and overseen.

“(x) An assurance that the State will report to the Secretary such information and data as the Secretary may require with respect to the provision of services and programs specified in paragraph (1), including information and data necessary to determine the performance measures for the State under paragraph (6) and compliance with paragraph (7).

“(C) REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES UNDER THE PREVENTION PLAN COMPONENT.—

“(i) LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subclause (ii), a State may not receive a Federal payment under this part for a given promising, supported, or well-supported practice unless (in accordance with subparagraph (B)(iii)(V)) the plan includes a well-designed and rigorous evaluation strategy for that practice.

“(ii) WAIVER OF LIMITATION.—The Secretary may waive the requirement for a well-designed and rigorous evaluation of any well-supported practice if the Secretary deems the evidence of the effectiveness of the practice to be compelling and the State meets the continuous quality improvement requirements included in subparagraph (B)(iii)(II) with regard to the practice.

“(6) PREVENTION SERVICES MEASURES.—

“(A) ESTABLISHMENT; ANNUAL UPDATES.—Beginning with fiscal year 2021, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall establish the following prevention services measures based on information and data reported by States that elect to provide services and programs specified in paragraph (1):

“(i) PERCENTAGE OF CANDIDATES FOR FOSTER CARE WHO DO NOT ENTER FOSTER CARE.—The percentage of candidates for foster care for whom, or on whose behalf, the services or programs are provided who do not enter foster care, including those placed with a kin caregiver outside of foster care, during the 12-month period in which the services or programs are provided and through the end of the succeeding 12-month period.

“(ii) PER-CHILD SPENDING.—The total amount of expenditures made for mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services or in-home parent skill-based programs, respectively, for, or on behalf of, each child described in paragraph (2).

“(B) DATA.—The Secretary shall establish and annually update the prevention services measures—

“(i) based on the median State values of the information reported under each clause of subparagraph (A) for the 3 then most recent years; and

“(ii) taking into account State differences in the price levels of consumption goods and services using the most recent regional price parities published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce or such other data as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(C) PUBLICATION OF STATE PREVENTION SERVICES MEASURES.—The Secretary shall annually make available to the public the prevention services measures of each State.

“(7) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT FOR STATE FOSTER CARE PREVENTION EXPENDITURES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—If a State elects to provide services and programs specified in paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, the State foster care prevention expenditures for the fiscal year shall not be less than the amount of

the expenditures for fiscal year 2014 (or, at the option of a State described in subparagraph (E), fiscal year 2015 or fiscal year 2016 (whichever the State elects)).

“(B) STATE FOSTER CARE PREVENTION EXPENDITURES.—The term ‘State foster care prevention expenditures’ means the following:

“(i) TANF; IV–B; SSBG.—State expenditures for foster care prevention services and activities under the State program funded under part A (including from amounts made available by the Federal Government), under the State plan developed under part B (including any such amounts), or under the Social Services Block Grant Programs under subtitle A of title XX (including any such amounts).

“(ii) OTHER STATE PROGRAMS.—State expenditures for foster care prevention services and activities under any State program that is not described in clause (i) (other than any State expenditures for foster care prevention services and activities under the State program under this part (including under a waiver of the program)).

“(C) STATE EXPENDITURES.—The term ‘State expenditures’ means all State or local funds that are expended by the State or a local agency including State or local funds that are matched or reimbursed by the Federal Government and State or local funds that are not matched or reimbursed by the Federal Government.

“(D) DETERMINATION OF PREVENTION SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall require each State that elects to provide services and programs specified in paragraph (1) to report the expenditures specified in subparagraph (B) for fiscal year 2014 and for such fiscal years thereafter as are necessary to determine whether the State is complying with the maintenance of effort requirement in subparagraph (A). The Secretary shall specify the specific services and activities under each program referred to in subparagraph (B) that are ‘prevention services and activities’ for purposes of the reports.

“(E) STATE DESCRIBED.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), a State is described in this subparagraph if the population of children in the State in 2014 was less than 200,000 (as determined by the United States Census Bureau).

“(8) PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF STATE FOSTER CARE PREVENTION EXPENDITURES AND FEDERAL IV–E PREVENTION FUNDS FOR MATCHING OR EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENT.—A State that elects to provide services and programs specified in paragraph (1) shall not use any State foster care prevention expenditures for a fiscal year for the State share of expenditures under section 474(a)(6) for a fiscal year.

“(9) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Expenditures described in section 474(a)(6)(B)—

“(A) shall not be eligible for payment under subparagraph (A), (B), or (E) of section 474(a)(3); and

“(B) shall be eligible for payment under section 474(a)(6)(B) without regard to whether the expenditures are incurred on behalf of a child who is, or is potentially, eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this part.

“(10) APPLICATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The provision of services or programs under this subsection to or on behalf of a child described in paragraph (2) shall not be considered to be receipt of aid or assistance under the State plan under this part for purposes of eligibility for any other program established under this Act.

“(B) CANDIDATES IN KINSHIP CARE.—A child described in paragraph (2) for whom such services or programs under this subsection are provided for more than 6 months while in the home of a kin caregiver, and who would satisfy the AFDC eligibility requirement of section 472(a)(3)(A)(ii)(II) but for residing in the home of the caregiver for more than 6 months, is deemed to satisfy that requirement for purposes of determining whether the child is eligible for foster care maintenance payments under section 472.”.

(b) DEFINITION.—Section 475 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(13) The term ‘child who is a candidate for foster care’ means, a child who is identified in a prevention plan under section 471(e)(4)(A) as being at imminent risk of entering foster care (without regard to whether the child would be eligible for foster care maintenance payments under section 472 or is or would be eligible for adoption assistance or kinship guardianship assistance payments under section 473) but who can remain safely in the child's home or in a kinship placement as long as services or programs specified in section 471(e)(1) that are necessary to prevent the entry of the child into foster care are provided. The term includes a child whose adoption or guardianship arrangement is at risk of a disruption or dissolution that would result in a foster care placement.”.

(c) PAYMENTS UNDER TITLE IV–E.—Section 474(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; plus”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) subject to section 471(e)—

“(A) for each quarter—

“(i) subject to clause (ii)—

“(I) beginning after September 30, 2019, and before October 1, 2026, an amount equal to 50 percent of the total amount expended during the quarter for the provision of services or programs specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 471(e)(1) that are provided in accordance with promising, supported, or well-supported practices that meet the applicable criteria specified for the practices in section 471(e)(4)(C); and

“(II) beginning after September 30, 2026, an amount equal to the Federal medical assistance percentage (which shall be as defined in section 1905(b), in the case of a State other than the District of Columbia, or 70 percent, in the case of the District of Columbia) of the total amount expended during the quarter for the provision of services or programs specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 471(e)(1) that are provided in accordance with promising, supported, or well-supported practices that meet the applicable criteria specified for the practices in section 471(e)(4)(C) (or, with respect to the payments made during the quarter under a cooperative agreement or contract entered into by the State and an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium for the administration or payment of funds under this part, an amount equal to the Federal medical assistance percentage that would apply under section 479B(d) (in this paragraph referred to as the ‘tribal FMAP’) if the Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium made the payments under a program

operated under that section, unless the tribal FMAP is less than the Federal medical assistance percentage that applies to the State); except that

“(ii) not less than 50 percent of the total amount expended by a State under clause (i) for a fiscal year shall be for the provision of services or programs specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 471(e)(1) that are provided in accordance with well-supported practices; plus

“(B) for each quarter specified in subparagraph (A), an amount equal to the sum of the following proportions of the total amount expended during the quarter—

“(i) 50 percent of so much of the expenditures as are found necessary by the Secretary for the proper and efficient administration of the State plan for the provision of services or programs specified in section 471(e)(1), including expenditures for activities approved by the Secretary that promote the development of necessary processes and procedures to establish and implement the provision of the services and programs for individuals who are eligible for the services and programs and expenditures attributable to data collection and reporting; and

“(ii) 50 percent of so much of the expenditures with respect to the provision of services and programs specified in section 471(e)(1) as are for training of personnel employed or preparing for employment by the State agency or by the local agency administering the plan in the political subdivision and of the members of the staff of State-licensed or State-approved child welfare agencies providing services to children described in section 471(e)(2) and their parents or kin caregivers, including on how to determine who are individuals eligible for the services or programs, how to identify and provide appropriate services and programs, and how to oversee and evaluate the ongoing appropriateness of the services and programs.”.

(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES, CLEARINGHOUSE, AND DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATIONS.—Section 476 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 676) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES, CLEARINGHOUSE, DATA COLLECTION, AND EVALUATIONS RELATING TO PREVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.—

“(1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall provide to States and, as applicable, to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia, technical assistance regarding the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) and shall disseminate best practices with respect to the provision of the services and programs, including how to plan and implement a well-designed and rigorous evaluation of a promising, supported, or well-supported practice.

“(2) CLEARINGHOUSE OF PROMISING, SUPPORTED, AND WELL-SUPPORTED PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall, directly or through grants, contracts, or interagency agreements, evaluate research on the practices specified in clauses (iii), (iv), and (v), respectively, of section 471(e)(4)(C), and programs that meet the requirements described in section 427(a)(1), including culturally specific, or location- or population-based adaptations of the practices, to identify and establish a public clearinghouse of the practices that satisfy each category described by such clauses. In addition, the clearinghouse shall include information on the specific outcomes associated with each practice, including whether the practice has been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect and reduce the likelihood of foster care placement by supporting birth families and kinship families and improving targeted supports for pregnant and parenting youth and their children.

“(3) DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary, directly or through grants, contracts, or interagency agreements, may collect data and conduct evaluations with respect to the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) for purposes of assessing the extent to which the provision of the services and programs—

“(A) reduces the likelihood of foster care placement;

“(B) increases use of kinship care arrangements; or

“(C) improves child well-being.

“(4) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives periodic reports based on the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) and the activities carried out under this subsection.

“(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make the reports to Congress submitted under this paragraph publicly available.

“(5) APPROPRIATION.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Secretary \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter to carry out this subsection.”.

(e) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 479B of such Act (42 U.S.C. 679c) is amended—

(A) in subsection (c)(1)—

(i) in subparagraph (C)(i)—

(I) in subclause (II), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(II) in subclause (III), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

“(IV) at the option of the tribe, organization, or consortium, services and programs specified in section 471(e)(1) to children described in section 471(e)(2) and their parents or kin caregivers, in accordance with section 471(e) and subparagraph (E).”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(E) PREVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS AND KIN CAREGIVERS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a tribe, organization, or consortium that elects to provide services and programs specified in section 471(e)(1) to children described in section 471(e)(2) and their parents or kin

caregivers under the plan, the Secretary shall specify the requirements applicable to the provision of the services and programs. The requirements shall, to the greatest extent practicable, be consistent with the requirements applicable to States under section 471(e) and shall permit the provision of the services and programs in the form of services and programs that are adapted to the culture and context of the tribal communities served.

“(ii) PERFORMANCE MEASURES.—The Secretary shall establish specific performance measures for each tribe, organization, or consortium that elects to provide services and programs specified in section 471(e)(1). The performance measures shall, to the greatest extent practicable, be consistent with the prevention services measures required for States under section 471(e)(6) but shall allow for consideration of factors unique to the provision of the services by tribes, organizations, or consortia.”; and

(B) in subsection (d)(1), by striking “and (5)” and inserting “(5), and (6)(A)”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for subsection (d) of section 479B of such Act (42 U.S.C. 679c) is amended by striking “FOR FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS”.

(f) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY TERRITORIES.—Section 1108(a)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1308(a)(2)) is amended by striking “or 413(f)” and inserting “413(f), or 474(a)(6)”.

## **SEC. 50712. FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking “or” and inserting “, with a parent residing in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility, but only to the extent permitted under subsection (j), or in a ”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(j) CHILDREN PLACED WITH A PARENT RESIDING IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, a child who is eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this section, or who would be eligible for the payments if the eligibility were determined without regard to paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (a), shall be eligible for the payments for a period of not more than 12 months during which the child is placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, but only if—

“(A) the recommendation for the placement is specified in the child's case plan before the placement;

“(B) the treatment facility provides, as part of the treatment for substance abuse, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling; and

“(C) the substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling is provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and in accordance with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions to address the consequences of trauma and facilitate healing.

“(2) APPLICATION.—With respect to children for whom foster care maintenance payments are made under paragraph (1), only the children who satisfy the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (a) shall be considered to be children with respect to whom foster care maintenance payments are made under this section for purposes of subsection (h) or section 473(b)(3)(B).”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 474(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(1)) is amended by inserting “subject to section 472(j),” before “an amount equal to the Federal” the first place it appears.

## **SEC. 50713. TITLE IV–E PAYMENTS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAMS.**

Section 474(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)), as amended by section 50711(c), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; plus”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(7) an amount equal to 50 percent of the amounts expended by the State during the quarter as the Secretary determines are for kinship navigator programs that meet the requirements described in section 427(a)(1) and that the Secretary determines are operated in accordance with promising, supported, or well-supported practices that meet the applicable criteria specified for the practices in section 471(e)(4)(C), without regard to whether the expenditures are incurred on behalf of children who are, or are potentially, eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this part.”.

## **PART II—ENHANCED SUPPORT UNDER TITLE IV–B**

### **SEC. 50721. ELIMINATION OF TIME LIMIT FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES WHILE IN FOSTER CARE AND PERMITTING TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES WHEN A CHILD RETURNS HOME FROM FOSTER CARE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 431(a)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629a(a)(7)) is amended—

(1) in the paragraph heading, by striking “TIME-LIMITED FAMILY” and inserting “FAMILY”; and

(2) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking “time-limited family” and inserting “family”;

(B) by inserting “or a child who has been returned home” after “child care institution”; and

(C) by striking “, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child, pursuant to section 475(5)(F), is considered to have entered foster care” and inserting “and to ensure the strength and stability of the reunification. In the case of a child who has been returned home, the services and activities shall only be provided during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child returns home”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 430 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629) is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “time-limited”.

(2) Subsections (a)(4), (a)(5)(A), and (b)(1) of section 432 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629b) are amended by striking “time-limited” each place it appears.

## **SEC. 50722. REDUCING BUREAUCRACY AND UNNECESSARY DELAYS WHEN PLACING CHILDREN IN HOMES ACROSS STATE LINES.**

(a) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 471(a)(25) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(25)) is amended—

(1) by striking “provide” and inserting “provides”; and

(2) by inserting “, which, in the case of a State other than the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, or American Samoa, not later than October 1, 2027, shall include the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system” before the first semicolon.

(b) EXEMPTION OF INDIAN TRIBES.—Section 479B(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 679c(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) INAPPLICABILITY OF STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT TO HAVE IN EFFECT PROCEDURES PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM.—The requirement in section 471(a)(25) that a State plan provide that the State shall have in effect procedures providing for the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system shall not apply to an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium that elects to operate a program under this part.”.

(c) FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.—Section 437 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.—

“(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this subsection is to facilitate the development of an electronic interstate case-processing system for the exchange of data and documents to expedite the placements of children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes across State lines.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A State that seeks funding under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary the following:

“(A) A description of the goals and outcomes to be achieved, which goals and outcomes must result in—

“(i) reducing the time it takes for a child to be provided with a safe and appropriate permanent living arrangement across State lines;

“(ii) improving administrative processes and reducing costs in the foster care system; and

“(iii) the secure exchange of relevant case files and other necessary materials in real time, and timely communications and placement decisions regarding interstate placements of children.

“(B) A description of the activities to be funded in whole or in part with the funds, including the sequencing of the activities.

“(C) A description of the strategies for integrating programs and services for children who are placed across State lines.

“(D) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

“(3) FUNDING AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may provide funds to a State that complies with paragraph (2). In providing funds under this subsection, the Secretary shall prioritize States that are not yet connected with the electronic interstate case-processing system referred to in paragraph (1).

“(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A State to which funding is provided under this subsection shall use the funding to support the State in connecting with, or enhancing or expediting services provided under, the electronic interstate case-processing system referred to in paragraph (1).

“(5) EVALUATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the final year in which funds are awarded under this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress, and make available to the general public by posting on a website, a report that contains the following information:

“(A) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) has changed the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

“(B) The number of cases subject to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children that were processed through the electronic interstate case-processing system, and the number of interstate child placement cases that were processed outside the electronic interstate case-processing system, by each State in each year.

“(C) The progress made by States in implementing the electronic interstate case-processing system.

“(D) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected various metrics related to child safety and well-being, including the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

“(E) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected administrative costs and caseworker time spent on placing children across State lines.

“(6) DATA INTEGRATION.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretariat for the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and the States, shall assess how the electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) could be used to better serve and protect children that come to the attention of the child welfare system, by—

“(A) connecting the system with other data systems (such as systems operated by State law enforcement and judicial agencies, systems operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purposes of the Innocence Lost National Initiative, and other systems);

“(B) simplifying and improving reporting related to paragraphs (34) and (35) of section 471(a) regarding children or youth who have been identified as being a sex trafficking victim or children missing from foster care; and

“(C) improving the ability of States to quickly comply with background check requirements of section 471(a)(20), including checks of child abuse and neglect registries as required by section 471(a)(20)(B).”.

(d) RESERVATION OF FUNDS TO IMPROVE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.—Section 437(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) IMPROVING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.—The Secretary shall reserve \$5,000,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2018 for grants under subsection (g), and the amount so reserved shall remain available through fiscal year 2022.”.

**SEC. 50723. ENHANCEMENTS TO GRANTS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.**

Section 437(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “INCREASE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND TO IMPROVE THE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AFFECTED BY” and inserting “IMPLEMENT IV–E PREVENTION SERVICES, AND IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND IMPROVE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY HEROIN, OPIOIDS, AND OTHER”;

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘regional partnership’ means a collaborative agreement (which may be established on an interstate, State, or intrastate basis) entered into by the following:

“(A) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR ALL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS.—

“(i) The State child welfare agency that is responsible for the administration of the State plan under this part and part E.

“(ii) The State agency responsible for administering the substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant provided under subpart II of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act.

“(B) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PROPOSING TO SERVE CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS.—If the partnership proposes to serve children in out-of-home placements, the Juvenile Court or Administrative Office of the Court that is most appropriate to oversee the administration of court programs in the region to address the population of families who come to the attention of the court due to child abuse or neglect.

“(C) OPTIONAL PARTNERS.—At the option of the partnership, any of the following:

“(i) An Indian tribe or tribal consortium.

“(ii) Nonprofit child welfare service providers.

“(iii) For-profit child welfare service providers.

“(iv) Community health service providers, including substance abuse treatment providers.

“(v) Community mental health providers.

“(vi) Local law enforcement agencies.

“(vii) School personnel.

“(viii) Tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortia of the agencies).

“(ix) Any other providers, agencies, personnel, officials, or entities that are related to the provision of child and family services under a State plan approved under this subpart.

“(D) EXCEPTION FOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WHERE THE LEAD APPLICANT IS AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL CONSORTIA.—If an Indian tribe or tribal consortium enters into a regional partnership for purposes of this subsection, the Indian tribe or tribal consortium—

“(i) may (but is not required to) include the State child welfare agency as a partner in the collaborative agreement;

“(ii) may not enter into a collaborative agreement only with tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortium of the agencies); and

“(iii) if the condition described in paragraph (2)(B) applies, may include tribal court organizations in lieu of other judicial partners.”;

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”; and

(ii) by striking “\$500,000 and not more than \$1,000,000” and inserting “\$250,000 and not more than \$1,000,000”;

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting “; PLANNING” after “APPROVAL”;

(ii) in clause (i), by striking “clause (ii)” and inserting “clauses (ii) and (iii)”; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) SUFFICIENT PLANNING.—A grant awarded under this subsection shall be disbursed in two phases: a planning phase (not to exceed 2 years) and an implementation phase. The total disbursement to a grantee for the planning phase may not exceed \$250,000, and may not exceed the total anticipated funding for the implementation phase.”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) LIMITATION ON PAYMENT FOR A FISCAL YEAR.—No payment shall be made under subparagraph (A) or (C) for a fiscal year until the Secretary determines that the eligible partnership has made sufficient progress in meeting the goals of the grant and that the members of the eligible partnership are coordinating to a reasonable degree with the other members of the eligible partnership.”;

(4) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting “, parents, and families” after “children”;

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking “safety and permanence for such children; and” and inserting “safe, permanent caregiving relationships for the children;”;

(iii) in clause (iii), by striking “or” and inserting “increase reunification rates for children who have been placed in out-of-home care, or decrease”; and

(iv) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (v) and inserting after clause (ii) the following:

“(iii) improve the substance abuse treatment outcomes for parents including retention in treatment and successful completion of treatment;

“(iv) facilitate the implementation, delivery, and effectiveness of prevention services and programs under section 471(e); and”;

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking “where appropriate,”; and

(C) by striking subparagraphs (E) and (F) and inserting the following:

“(E) A description of a plan for sustaining the services provided by or activities funded under the grant after the conclusion of the grant period, including through the use of prevention services and programs under section 471(e) and other funds provided to the State for child welfare and substance abuse prevention and treatment services.

“(F) Additional information needed by the Secretary to determine that the proposed activities and implementation will be consistent with research or evaluations showing which practices and approaches are most effective.”;

(5) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking “abuse treatment” and inserting “use disorder treatment including medication assisted treatment and in-home substance abuse disorder treatment and recovery”;

(6) in paragraph (7)—

(A) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (C); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E) and inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) demonstrate a track record of successful collaboration among child welfare, substance abuse disorder treatment and mental health agencies; and”;

(7) in paragraph (8)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking “establish indicators that will be” and inserting “review indicators that are”; and

(ii) by striking “in using funds made available under such grants to achieve the purpose of this subsection” and inserting “and establish a set of core indicators related to child safety, parental recovery, parenting capacity, and family well-being. In developing the core indicators, to the extent possible, indicators shall be made consistent with the outcome measures described in section 471(e)(6)”; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “base the performance measures on lessons learned from prior rounds of regional partnership grants under this subsection, and” before “consult”; and

(ii) by striking clauses (iii) and (iv) and inserting the following:

“(iii) Other stakeholders or constituencies as determined by the Secretary.”;

(8) in paragraph (9)(A), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than September 30 of each fiscal year in which a recipient of a grant under this subsection is paid funds under the grant, and every 6 months thereafter, the grant recipient shall submit to the Secretary a report on the services provided and activities carried out during the reporting period, progress made in achieving the goals of the program, the number of children, adults, and families receiving services, and such additional information as the Secretary determines is necessary. The report due not later than September 30 of the last such fiscal year shall include, at a minimum, data on each of the performance indicators included in the evaluation of the regional partnership.”; and

(9) in paragraph (10), by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

### **PART III—MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **SEC. 50731. 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 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (34)(B), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (35)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(36) provides 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; and”.

#### **SEC. 50732. DEVELOPMENT OF A STATEWIDE PLAN TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES.**

Section 422(b)(19) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)(19)) is amended to read as follows:

“(19) document steps taken to track and prevent child maltreatment deaths by including—

“(A) a description of the steps the State is taking to compile complete and accurate information on the deaths required by Federal law to be reported by the State agency referred to in paragraph (1), including gathering relevant information on the deaths from the relevant organizations in the State including entities such as State vital statistics department, child death review teams, law enforcement agencies, offices of medical examiners, or coroners; and

“(B) a description of the steps the State is taking to develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide plan to prevent the fatalities that involves and engages relevant public and private agency partners, including those in public health, law enforcement, and the courts.”.

#### **SEC. 50733. MODERNIZING THE TITLE AND PURPOSE OF TITLE IV–E.**

(a) PART HEADING.—The heading for part E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

**“PART E—FEDERAL PAYMENTS FOR FOSTER CARE, PREVENTION, AND PERMANENCY”.**

(b) PURPOSE.—The first sentence of section 470 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 670) is amended—

(1) by striking “1995) and” and inserting “1995),”;

(2) by inserting “kinship guardianship assistance, and prevention services or programs specified in section 471(e)(1),” after “needs,”; and

(3) by striking “(commencing with the fiscal year which begins October 1, 1980)”.

## **SEC. 50734. EFFECTIVE DATES.**

(a) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by parts I through III of this subtitle shall take effect on October 1, 2018.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—The amendments made by sections 50711(d), 50731, and 50733 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 B or 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 parts I through III of this subtitle, 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 parts I through III of this subtitle (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.

## **PART IV—ENSURING THE NECESSITY OF A PLACEMENT THAT IS NOT IN A FOSTER FAMILY HOME**

### **SEC. 50741. LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR PLACEMENTS THAT ARE NOT IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES.**

(a) LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672), as amended by section 50712(a), is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by inserting “, but only to the extent permitted under subsection (k)” after “institution”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(k) LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with the third week for which foster care maintenance payments are made under this section on behalf of a child placed in a child-care institution, no Federal payment shall be made to the State under section 474(a)(1) for amounts expended for foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child unless—

“(A) the child is placed in a child-care institution that is a setting specified in paragraph (2) (or is placed in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility consistent with subsection (j)); and

“(B) in the case of a child placed in a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in paragraph (4)), the requirements specified in paragraph (3) and section 475A(c) are met.

“(2) SPECIFIED SETTINGS FOR PLACEMENT.—The settings for placement specified in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) A qualified residential treatment program (as defined in paragraph (4)).

“(B) A setting specializing in providing prenatal, post-partum, or parenting supports for youth.

“(C) In the case of a child who has attained 18 years of age, a supervised setting in which the child is living independently.

“(D) A setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims, in accordance with section 471(a)(9)(C).

“(3) ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATENESS OF PLACEMENT IN A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.—

“(A) DEADLINE FOR ASSESSMENT.—In the case of a child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program, if the assessment required under section 475A(c)(1) is not completed within 30 days after the placement is made, no Federal payment shall be made to the State under section 474(a)(1) for any amounts expended for foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child during the placement.

“(B) DEADLINE FOR TRANSITION OUT OF PLACEMENT.—If the assessment required under section 475A(c)(1) determines that the placement of a child in a qualified residential treatment program is not appropriate, a court disapproves such a placement under section 475A(c)(2), or a child who has been in an approved placement in a qualified residential treatment program is going to return home or be placed with a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home, Federal payments shall be made to the State under section 474(a)(1) for amounts expended for foster care maintenance payments on

behalf of the child while the child remains in the qualified residential treatment program only during the period necessary for the child to transition home or to such a placement. In no event shall a State receive Federal payments under section 474(a)(1) for amounts expended for foster care maintenance payments on behalf of a child who remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program after the end of the 30-day period that begins on the date a determination is made that the placement is no longer the recommended or approved placement for the child.

“(4) QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.—For purposes of this part, the term ‘qualified residential treatment program’ means a program that—

“(A) has a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the needs, including clinical needs as appropriate, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances and, with respect to a child, is able to implement the treatment identified for the child by the assessment of the child required under section 475A(c);

“(B) subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), has registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff who—

“(i) provide care within the scope of their practice as defined by State law;

“(ii) are on-site according to the treatment model referred to in subparagraph (A); and

“(iii) are available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week;

“(C) to extent appropriate, and in accordance with the child’s best interests, facilitates participation of family members in the child’s treatment program;

“(D) facilitates outreach to the family members of the child, including siblings, documents how the outreach is made (including contact information), and maintains contact information for any known biological family and fictive kin of the child;

“(E) documents how family members are integrated into the treatment process for the child, including post-discharge, and how sibling connections are maintained;

“(F) provides discharge planning and family-based aftercare support for at least 6 months post-discharge; and

“(G) is licensed in accordance with section 471(a)(10) and is accredited by any of the following independent, not-for-profit organizations:

“(i) The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

“(ii) The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

“(iii) The Council on Accreditation (COA).

“(iv) Any other independent, not-for-profit accrediting organization approved by the Secretary.

“(5) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The prohibition in paragraph (1) on Federal payments under section 474(a)(1) shall not be construed as prohibiting Federal payments for administrative expenditures incurred on behalf of a child placed in a child-care institution and for which payment is available under section 474(a)(3).

“(6) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The requirements in paragraph (4)(B) shall not be construed as requiring a qualified residential treatment program to acquire nursing and behavioral health staff solely through means of a direct employer to employee relationship.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 474(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(1)), as amended by section 50712(b), is amended by striking “section 472(j)” and inserting “subsections (j) and (k) of section 472”.

(b) DEFINITION OF FOSTER FAMILY HOME, CHILD-CARE INSTITUTION.—Section 472(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 672(c)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this part:

“(1) FOSTER FAMILY HOME.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘foster family home’ means the home of an individual or family—

“(i) that is licensed or approved by the State in which it is situated as a foster family home that meets the standards established for the licensing or approval; and

“(ii) in which a child in foster care has been placed in the care of an individual, who resides with the child and who has been licensed or approved by the State to be a foster parent—

“(I) that the State deems capable of adhering to the reasonable and prudent parent standard;

“(II) that provides 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or other caretakers; and

“(III) that provides the care for not more than six children in foster care.

“(B) STATE FLEXIBILITY.—The number of foster children that may be cared for in a home under subparagraph (A) may exceed the numerical limitation in subparagraph (A)(ii)(III), at the option of the State, for any of the following reasons:

“(i) To allow a parenting youth in foster care to remain with the child of the parenting youth.

“(ii) To allow siblings to remain together.

“(iii) To allow a child with an established meaningful relationship with the family to remain with the family.

“(iv) To allow a family with special training or skills to provide care to a child who has a severe disability.

“(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not be construed as prohibiting a foster parent from renting the home in which the parent cares for a foster child placed in the parent’s care.

“(2) CHILD-CARE INSTITUTION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘child-care institution’ means a private child-care institution, or a public child-care institution which accommodates no more than 25 children, which is licensed by the State in which it is situated or has been approved by the agency of the State responsible for licensing or approval of institutions of this type as meeting the standards established for the licensing.

“(B) SUPERVISED SETTINGS.—In the case of a child who has attained 18 years of age, the term shall include a supervised setting in which the individual is living independently, in accordance with such conditions as the Secretary shall establish in regulations.

“(C) EXCLUSIONS.—The term shall not include detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent.”.

(c) TRAINING FOR STATE JUDGES, ATTORNEYS, AND OTHER LEGAL PERSONNEL IN CHILD WELFARE CASES.—Section 438(b)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(b)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting “shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home,” after “with respect to the child,”.

(d) ASSURANCE OF NONIMPACT ON JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM.—

(1) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 471(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)), as amended by section 50731, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(37) includes a certification that, in response to the limitation imposed under section 472(k) with respect to foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of any child who is placed in a setting that is not a foster family home, the State will not enact or advance policies or practices that would result in a significant increase in the population of youth in the State’s juvenile justice system.”.

(2) GAO STUDY AND REPORT.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall evaluate the impact, if any, on State juvenile justice systems of the limitation imposed under section 472(k) of the Social Security Act (as added by section 50741(a)(1)) on foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of any child who is placed in a setting that is not a foster family home, in accordance with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) of this section. In particular, the Comptroller General shall evaluate the extent to which children in foster care who also are subject to the juvenile justice system of the State are placed in a facility under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system and whether the lack of available congregate care placements under the jurisdiction of the child welfare systems is a contributing factor to that result. Not later than December 31, 2025, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the evaluation.

**SEC. 50742. ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE NEED FOR PLACEMENT IN A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.**

Section 475A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) ASSESSMENT, DOCUMENTATION, AND JUDICIAL DETERMINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PLACEMENT IN A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.—In the case of any child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in section 472(k)(4)), the following requirements

shall apply for purposes of approving the case plan for the child and the case system review procedure for the child:

“(1) (A) Within 30 days of the start of each placement in such a setting, a qualified individual (as defined in subparagraph (D)) shall—

“(i) assess the strengths and needs of the child using an age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, functional assessment tool approved by the Secretary;

“(ii) determine whether the needs of the child can be met with family members or through placement in a foster family home or, if not, which setting from among the settings specified in section 472(k)(2) would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child; and

“(iii) develop a list of child-specific short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals.

“(B) (i) The State shall assemble a family and permanency team for the child in accordance with the requirements of clauses (ii) and (iii). The qualified individual conducting the assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall work in conjunction with the family of, and permanency team for, the child while conducting and making the assessment.

“(ii) The family and permanency team shall consist of all appropriate biological family members, relative, and fictive kin of the child, as well as, as appropriate, professionals who are a resource to the family of the child, such as teachers, medical or mental health providers who have treated the child, or clergy. In the case of a child who has attained age 14, the family and permanency team shall include the members of the permanency planning team for the child that are selected by the child in accordance with section 475(5)(C)(iv).

“(iii) The State shall document in the child's case plan—

“(I) the reasonable and good faith effort of the State to identify and include all the individuals described in clause (ii) on the child's family and permanency team;

“(II) all contact information for members of the family and permanency team, as well as contact information for other family members and fictive kin who are not part of the family and permanency team;

“(III) evidence that meetings of the family and permanency team, including meetings relating to the assessment required under subparagraph (A), are held at a time and place convenient for family;

“(IV) if reunification is the goal, evidence demonstrating that the parent from whom the child was removed provided input on the members of the family and permanency team;

“(V) evidence that the assessment required under subparagraph (A) is determined in conjunction with the family and permanency team;

“(VI) the placement preferences of the family and permanency team relative to the assessment that recognizes children should be placed with their siblings unless there is a finding by the court that such placement is contrary to their best interest; and

“(VII) if the placement preferences of the family and permanency team and child are not the placement setting recommended by the qualified individual conducting the assessment under subparagraph (A), the reasons why the preferences of the team and of the child were not recommended.

“(C) In the case of a child who the qualified individual conducting the assessment under subparagraph (A) determines should not be placed in a foster family home, the qualified individual shall specify in writing the reasons why the needs of the child cannot be met by the family of the child or in a foster family home. A shortage or lack of foster family homes shall not be an acceptable reason for determining that the needs of the child cannot be met in a foster family home. The qualified individual also shall specify in writing why the recommended placement in a qualified residential treatment program is the setting that will provide the child with the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment and how that placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child.

“(D) (i) Subject to clause (ii), in this subsection, the term ‘qualified individual’ means a trained professional or licensed clinician who is not an employee of the State agency and who is not connected to, or affiliated with, any placement setting in which children are placed by the State.

“(ii) The Secretary may approve a request of a State to waive any requirement in clause (i) upon a submission by the State, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary, that certifies that the trained professionals or licensed clinicians with responsibility for performing the assessments described in subparagraph (A) shall maintain objectivity with respect to determining the most effective and appropriate placement for a child.

“(2) Within 60 days of the start of each placement in a qualified residential treatment program, a family or juvenile court or another court (including a tribal court) of competent jurisdiction, or an administrative body appointed or approved by the court, independently, shall—

“(A) consider the assessment, determination, and documentation made by the qualified individual conducting the assessment under paragraph (1);

“(B) determine whether the needs of the child can be met through placement in a foster family home or, if not, whether placement of the child in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and whether that placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child; and

“(C) approve or disapprove the placement.

“(3) The written documentation made under paragraph (1)(C) and documentation of the determination and approval or disapproval of the placement in a qualified residential treatment program by a court or administrative body under paragraph (2) shall be included in and made part of the case plan for the child.

“(4) As long as a child remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program, the State agency shall submit evidence at each status review and each permanency hearing held with respect to the child—

“(A) demonstrating that ongoing assessment of the strengths and needs of the child continues to support the determination that the needs of the child cannot be met through placement in a foster family home, that the placement in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment, and that the placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child;

“(B) documenting the specific treatment or service needs that will be met for the child in the placement and the length of time the child is expected to need the treatment or services; and

“(C) documenting the efforts made by the State agency to prepare the child to return home or to be placed with a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home.

“(5) In the case of any child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program for more than 12 consecutive months or 18 nonconsecutive months (or, in the case of a child who has not attained age 13, for more than 6 consecutive or nonconsecutive months), the State agency shall submit to the Secretary—

“(A) the most recent versions of the evidence and documentation specified in paragraph (4); and

“(B) the signed approval of the head of the State agency for the continued placement of the child in that setting.”.

#### **SEC. 50743. PROTOCOLS TO PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE DIAGNOSES.**

(a) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 422(b)(15)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)(15)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (vi), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) by redesignating clause (vii) as clause (viii); and

(3) by inserting after clause (vi) the following:

“(vii) the procedures and protocols the State has established to ensure that children in foster care placements are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of the inappropriate diagnoses; and”.

(b) EVALUATION.—Section 476 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 676), as amended by section 50711(d), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) EVALUATION OF STATE PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS TO PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE DIAGNOSES OF MENTAL ILLNESS OR OTHER CONDITIONS.—The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the procedures and protocols established by States in accordance with the requirements of section 422(b)(15)(A)(vii). The evaluation shall analyze the extent to which States comply with and enforce the procedures and protocols and the effectiveness of various State procedures and protocols and shall identify best practices. Not later than January 1, 2020, the Secretary shall submit a report on the results of the evaluation to Congress.”.

#### **SEC. 50744. ADDITIONAL DATA AND REPORTS REGARDING CHILDREN PLACED IN A SETTING THAT IS NOT A FOSTER FAMILY HOME.**

Section 479A(a)(7)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 679b(a)(7)(A)) is amended by striking clauses (i) through (vi) and inserting the following:

“(i) with respect to each such placement—

“(I) the type of the placement setting, including whether the placement is shelter care, a group home and if so, the range of the child population in the home, a residential treatment facility, a hospital or institution providing medical, rehabilitative, or psychiatric care, a setting specializing in providing prenatal, post-partum, or parenting supports, or some other kind of child-care institution and if so, what kind;

“(II) the number of children in the placement setting and the age, race, ethnicity, and gender of each of the children;

“(III) for each child in the placement setting, the length of the placement of the child in the setting, whether the placement of the child in the setting is the first placement of the child and if not, the number and type of previous placements of the child, and whether the child has special needs or another diagnosed mental or physical illness or condition; and

“(IV) the extent of any specialized education, treatment, counseling, or other services provided in the setting; and

“(ii) separately, the number and ages of children in the placements who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement; and”.

**SEC. 50745. CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS AND CHECKS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRIES FOR ADULTS WORKING IN CHILD-CARE INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER GROUP CARE SETTINGS.**

(a) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 471(a)(20) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(20)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (B)(iii), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(3) in subparagraph (C), by adding “and” after the semicolon; and

(4) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following new subparagraph:

“(D) provides procedures for any child-care institution, including a group home, residential treatment center, shelter, or other congregate care setting, to conduct criminal records checks, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases (as defined in section 534(f)(3)(A) of title 28, United States Code), and checks described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, on any adult working in a child-care institution, including a group home, residential treatment center, shelter, or other congregate care setting, unless the State reports to the Secretary the alternative criminal records checks and child abuse registry checks the State conducts on any adult working in a child-care institution, including a group home, residential treatment center, shelter, or other congregate care setting, and why the checks specified in this subparagraph are not appropriate for the State;”.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Subparagraphs (A) and (C) of section 471(a)(20) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(20)) are each amended by striking “section 534(e)(3)(A)” and inserting “section 534(f)(3)(A)”.

**SEC. 50746. EFFECTIVE DATES; APPLICATION TO WAIVERS.**

(a) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2) and subsections (b), (c), and (d), the amendments made by this part shall take effect as if enacted on January 1, 2018.

(2) TRANSITION RULE.—In the case of a State plan under part B or 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 part, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of part B or E of title IV of such Act solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet the 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.

(b) LIMITATION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR PLACEMENTS THAT ARE NOT IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES AND RELATED PROVISIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by sections 50741(a), 50741(b), 50741(d), and 50742 shall take effect on October 1, 2019.

(2) STATE OPTION TO DELAY EFFECTIVE DATE FOR NOT MORE THAN 2 YEARS.—If a State requests a delay in the effective date, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall delay the effective date provided for in paragraph (1) with respect to the State for the amount of time requested by the State, not to exceed 2 years. If the effective date is so delayed for a period with respect to a State under the preceding sentence, then—

(A) notwithstanding section 50734, the date that the amendments made by section 50711(c) take effect with respect to the State shall be delayed for the period; and

(B) in applying section 474(a)(6) of the Social Security Act with respect to the State, “on or after the date this paragraph takes effect with respect to the State” is deemed to be substituted for “after September 30, 2019” in subparagraph (A)(i)(I) of such section.

(c) CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS AND CHECKS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRIES FOR ADULTS WORKING IN CHILD-CARE INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER GROUP CARE SETTINGS.—Subject to subsection (a)(2), the amendments made by section 50745 shall take effect on October 1, 2018.

(d) APPLICATION TO STATES WITH WAIVERS.—In the case of a State that, on the date of enactment of this Act, has in effect a waiver approved under section 1130 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–9), the amendments made by this part shall not apply with respect to the State before the expiration (determined without regard to any extensions) of the waiver to the extent the amendments are inconsistent with the terms of the waiver.

**PART V—CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**SEC. 50751. SUPPORTING AND RETAINING FOSTER FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN.**

(a) SUPPORTING AND RETAINING FOSTER PARENTS AS A FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE.—Section 431(a)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 631(a)(2)(B)) is amended by redesignating clauses (iii) through (vi) as clauses (iv) through (vii), respectively, and inserting after clause (ii) the following:

“(iii) To support and retain foster families so they can provide quality family-based settings for children in foster care.”.

(b) SUPPORT FOR FOSTER FAMILY HOMES.—Section 436 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) SUPPORT FOR FOSTER FAMILY HOMES.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Secretary for fiscal year 2018, \$8,000,000 for the Secretary to make competitive grants to States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality foster families to increase their capacity to place more children in family settings, focused on States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia with the highest percentage of children in non-family settings. The amount appropriated under this subparagraph shall remain available through fiscal year 2022.”.

## **SEC. 50752. EXTENSION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS.**

(a) EXTENSION OF STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM.—Section 425 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 625) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(b) EXTENSION OF PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM AUTHORIZATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 436(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f(a)) is amended by striking all that follows “\$345,000,000” and inserting “for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021”.

(2) DISCRETIONARY GRANTS.—Section 437(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(a)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(c) EXTENSION OF FUNDING RESERVATIONS FOR MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISITS AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS.—Section 436(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(d) REAUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING FOR STATE COURTS.—

(1) EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.—Section 438(c)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(c)(1)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(2) EXTENSION OF FEDERAL SHARE.—Section 438(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(d)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(e) REPEAL OF EXPIRED PROVISIONS.—Section 438(e) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(e)) is repealed.

**SEC. 50753. 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), 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, 2019, 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”.

## **PART VI—CONTINUING INCENTIVES TO STATES TO PROMOTE ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP**

### **SEC. 50761. REAUTHORIZING ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 473A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(4), by striking “2013 through 2015” and inserting “2016 through 2020”;

(2) in subsection (h)(1)(D), by striking “2016” and inserting “2021”; and

(3) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “2016” and inserting “2021”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if enacted on October 1, 2017.

## **PART VII—TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS**

### **SEC. 50771. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO DATA EXCHANGE STANDARDS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM COORDINATION.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 440 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629m) is amended to read as follows:

#### **“SEC. 440. DATA EXCHANGE STANDARDS FOR IMPROVED INTEROPERABILITY.**

“(a) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary shall, in consultation with an interagency work group established by the Office of Management and Budget and considering State government perspectives, by rule, designate data exchange standards to govern, under this part and part E—

“(1) necessary categories of information that State agencies operating programs under State plans approved under this part are required under applicable Federal law to electronically exchange with another State agency; and

“(2) Federal reporting and data exchange required under applicable Federal law.

“(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The data exchange standards required by paragraph (1) shall, to the extent practicable—

“(1) incorporate a widely accepted, non-proprietary, searchable, computer-readable format, such as the Extensible Markup Language;

“(2) contain interoperable standards developed and maintained by intergovernmental partnerships, such as the National Information Exchange Model;

“(3) incorporate interoperable standards developed and maintained by Federal entities with authority over contracting and financial assistance;

“(4) be consistent with and implement applicable accounting principles;

“(5) be implemented in a manner that is cost-effective and improves program efficiency and effectiveness; and

“(6) be capable of being continually upgraded as necessary.

“(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require a change to existing data exchange standards found to be effective and efficient.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Not later than the date that is 24 months after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue a proposed rule that—

(1) identifies federally required data exchanges, include specification and timing of exchanges to be standardized, and address the factors used in determining whether and when to standardize data exchanges; and

(2) specifies State implementation options and describes future milestones.

## **SEC. 50772. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO STATE REQUIREMENT TO ADDRESS THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN.**

Section 422(b)(18) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)(18)) is amended by striking “such children” and inserting “all vulnerable children under 5 years of age”.

## **PART VIII—ENSURING STATES REINVEST SAVINGS RESULTING FROM INCREASE IN ADOPTION ASSISTANCE**

### **SEC. 50781. DELAY OF ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PHASE-IN.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The table in section 473(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673(e)(1)(B)) is amended by striking the last 2 rows and inserting the following:

“2017 through 2023	2
2024	2 (or, in the case of a child for whom an adoption assistance agreement is entered into under this section on or after July 1, 2024, any age)
2025 or thereafter	any age.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if enacted on January 1, 2018.

**SEC. 50782. GAO STUDY AND REPORT ON STATE REINVESTMENT OF SAVINGS RESULTING FROM INCREASE IN ADOPTION ASSISTANCE.**

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall study the extent to which States are complying with the requirements of section 473(a)(8) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673(a)(8)) relating to the effects of phasing out the AFDC income eligibility requirements for adoption assistance payments under section 473 of the Social Security Act, as enacted by section 402 of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351; 122 Stat. 3975) and amended by section 206 of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113–183; 128 Stat. 1919). In particular, the Comptroller General shall analyze the extent to which States are complying with the following requirements under section 473(a)(8)(D) of the Social Security Act:

(1) The requirement to spend an amount equal to the amount of the savings (if any) in State expenditures under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act resulting from phasing out the AFDC income eligibility requirements for adoption assistance payments under section 473 of such Act to provide to children of families any service that may be provided under part B or E of title IV of such Act.

(2) The requirement that a State shall spend not less than 30 percent of the amount of any savings described in paragraph (1) on post-adoption services, post-guardianship services, and services to support and sustain positive permanent outcomes for children who otherwise might enter into foster care under the responsibility of the State, with at least ⅓ of the spending by the State to comply with the 30 percent requirement being spent on post-adoption and post-guardianship services.

(b) REPORT.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Finance of the Senate, the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services a report that contains the results of the study required by subsection (a), including recommendations to ensure compliance with laws referred to in subsection (a).