



FIGHTING for PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

## **The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act**

*U.S. Senators Bob Casey, Tina Smith and Sherrod Brown*

In today's economy, a college degree or postsecondary credential is increasingly important to securing a job with a living wage and good benefits. Yet far too often, higher education remains out of reach for foster and homeless youth. Foster and homeless youth often experience poor academic preparation, considerable financial hardship, housing challenges, and limited social capital to help navigate the varied demands of higher education. For example, a study by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab and the Association of Community College Trustees found that approximately 13-14 percent of community college students were homeless, noting that 30 percent of former foster youth surveyed experienced homelessness. These youth also are at higher risk for lasting health and mental health effects from traumas experienced, poor health care, and other stressors that undermine college success.

Poor college graduation and attendance rates reflect these challenges. A [report](#) produced by the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education found that although over 70 percent of 17-18-year-olds in foster care want to attend college, less than half enroll in postsecondary education and only 3 to 10 percent attain a bachelor's degree. In fact, a 2021 report by John Burton Advocates for Youth found that foster youth experienced the highest rate of failure in Satisfactory Academic Progress—34 percent—after the first year of college. The findings from a Government Accountability Office [report](#) indicate unaccompanied homeless youth have similar college enrollment patterns as foster youth. To enable foster and homeless youth to have the best chance in school, work, and life, we must ensure these students have the appropriate support to enroll and graduate with a postsecondary credential.

The *Fostering Success in Higher Education Act* would improve college access, retention, and completion rates for foster and homeless youth by substantially improving state capacity to support these students as they transition to and attend college. Specifically, this bill would:

- Invest \$150 million a year in states, tribes, & territories to establish or expand statewide initiatives to assist foster and homeless youth in enrolling in and graduating from institutions of higher education;
- Establish formula grants to states based on a state's share of foster youth and homeless youth, with a \$500,000 minimum grant;
- Dedicate 70 percent of grants to (a) developing Institutions of Excellence committed to serving foster and homeless youth via robust support services; (b) covering the remaining cost of attendance beyond federal and state grant aid, (c) providing comprehensive wraparound services, and (d) offering robust student health and mental services;
- Direct 25 percent of grants to establish intensive, statewide transition initiatives to improve the college going culture and increase college enrollment by foster and homeless youth;
- Reserve 7 percent of funds for technical assistance and evaluation, 3 percent for tribes, tribal consortia, or tribal organizations and 2 percent for territories.

## **Supporting Organizations**

### **National Organizations**

Alliance for Positive Youth Development  
Association of Children's Residential & Community services (ACRC)  
Boys Town  
C4 Innovations  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for the Study of Social Policy  
Children's Advocacy Institute  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Rights  
EDGE Consulting Partners  
Family Centered Treatment Foundation  
Family Promise  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
First Quarter Strategies  
First Star Institute  
FosterClub  
Haynes-Maslow Logistics & Consulting  
HEAR US Inc.  
iFoster  
Juvenile Law Center  
Maddy Day LLC & Associates  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Center on Adoption and Permanency  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Crittenton  
National Education Association  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
Partners for Our Children at the University of Washington in Seattle  
SchoolHouse Connection  
Student Housing Advocate Alliance  
The Family Focused Treatment Association  
The Field Center  
The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice  
Think of Us  
Youth Law Center  
Youth Villages

### **State and Local Organizations**

15th Night  
18 Degrees  
ACTION Ohio

Agora Cyber Charter School  
All About the Youth Community Center (AAYCC)  
All Saints Church Foster Care Project  
Ardmore City Schools  
Bellevue School District  
Belmont Charter School  
California Youth Connection  
Center for Transforming Lives  
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council  
Chicago HOPES for Kids  
Child Care Services Association  
Children's Advocacy Alliance  
Children's Home Society of North Carolina  
Children's Law Center of California  
Community Education Partnerships  
Community Outreach through Radical Empowerment (CORE)  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Dane County Youth Action Board  
Deming Public Schools  
Direction Service  
Family Promise of Colorado Springs  
Foster Forward  
Fostering Success Michigan  
Gilliam County Family Services  
H.O.M.E.S Campaign  
Healthy Healed Whole LLC  
Henry County Board of Education  
HerStory Ensemble LLC  
Holy Wisdom Monastery  
Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County  
John Burton Advocates for Youth  
Kalispell HEART Program  
KidsVoice  
Lane Community College  
Lane Community College  
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley  
Law Office of Kara Jennings LLC  
Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC)  
Lockport City School District  
LYTE Collective  
Maslow Project  
Medford School District, Oregon  
Menominee Indian School District  
MICAH  
MOSES  
My Friend's Place

NCSU Feed the Pack Food Pantry  
Nevada Kids Foundation, Inc.  
Nevada System of Higher Education  
Oak Tree Resources  
OHIO Youth Action Board  
Ozone House Youth & Family Services  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
People's Emergency Center  
PFLAG  
PFLAG Wilmington DE  
Power4Good  
Pressley Ridge  
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center  
RowlandUSD-Family Resource Center

Sacramento LGBT Community Center  
Safe Place for Youth  
Salvation Army  
Sanctuary of Hope  
SUN Scholars Inc.  
Tenant Resource Center  
Texas Appleseed  
TexProtects, The Texas Association for the  
Protection of Children  
The Center for Urban Youth and Family  
development  
Truckee Meadows Community College  
UpSpring  
Volunteers of America Northern New England  
Woodstown Pilesgrove-Regional School District  
YouthCare