

At a Glance

Foster Care Legislation

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Ways and Means on April 29, 2026

On April 29, 2026, the House Committee on Ways and Means ordered six bills to be reported. Each of the bills is related to the administration of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. Details of the estimated costs of the bills are discussed in the text.

CBO estimates that none of the bills would affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that H.R. 7432, H.R. 7463, and H.R. 7995 would each increase spending subject to appropriation by less than \$500,000 over the 2026-2031 period.

CBO estimates that none of the bills would increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037.

Bill	Net Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit Over the 2026-2036 Period (Millions of Dollars)	Changes in Spending Subject to Appropriation Over the 2026-2031 Period (Outlays, Millions of Dollars)	Mandate Effects?
H.R. 7343	0	0	No
H.R. 7432	0	*	No
H.R. 7463	0	*	No
H.R. 7529	0	0	No
H.R. 7655	0	0	No
H.R. 7995	0	*	No

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.



Summary of Legislation

On April 29, 2026, the House Committee on Ways and Means ordered six bills to be reported. This document provides estimates for those bills. Each of the bills would amend section 447 of the Social Security Act to broaden the purpose of funding provided for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program).

Estimated Federal Cost

The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 600 (income security).

Basis of Estimate

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bills will be enacted in 2026 and that the estimated amounts will be appropriated each year. This cost estimate does not include any effects of interactions among the legislation. If all six bills were combined and enacted as a single piece of legislation, the effects could be different from the sum of the separate estimates.

Background

The Chafee program provides funding to states, the District of Columbia, tribes, and U.S. territories to support the educational, employment, family, and housing needs of certain foster youth who are transitioning to independent adult life. The program is authorized under section 477 of the Social Security Act, which permanently provides \$143 million annually for the program, which is classified as direct (or mandatory) spending. That law also authorizes the appropriation of \$60 million annually to provide foster youth with education and training vouchers, which can be used toward qualified education or employment training expenses. In CBO's baseline projections, states spend all of the funding provided.

H.R. 7343, the Foster Youth Workforce Opportunity Act, would expand eligibility for education and training vouchers to youth who left foster care at age 14 or older for kinship guardianship or adoption. Under current law, eligibility for vouchers is limited to youth who experienced foster care at age 14 or older, who aged out of foster care, or who were adopted or left for kinship guardianship after age 16. The bill also would expand the allowable uses for education and training vouchers to permit youth to use vouchers for short-term workforce or vocational training, credentialing programs, apprenticeships, and general or remedial education.

The bill would not change the amount authorized to be appropriated for training vouchers. Thus, CBO estimates that H.R. 7343 would have no effect on the federal budget.

H.R. 7432, the Foster Youth Housing Opportunity Act, would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to issue guidance to states for coordinating with federal housing programs to improve



services for youth aging out of foster care. The bill also would allow states to use mandatory funds for the Chafee program to provide various supportive services, including financial assistance for security deposits and moving costs. Finally, H.R. 7432 would require the Secretary of HHS to submit a report to the Congress on housing outcomes for foster youth.

The bill would not increase the amount of funding provided for the Chafee program. Thus, CBO estimates that allowing those funds to be used for additional purposes under H.R. 7432 would not affect direct spending.

According to information provided by HHS, the agency is currently implementing many of the activities required under H.R. 7432 to comply with an executive order that was issued on November 13, 2025.¹ Those activities include collecting data from the National Youth in Transition Database dashboard and issuing joint letters from HHS and HUD to clarify rules and promote the availability of housing-related resources for foster youth. Thus, CBO estimates that implementing the administrative and reporting requirements of H.R. 7432 would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2026-2031 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

H.R. 7463, the Foster Youth Postsecondary Education Access and Success Act, would increase the annual limit on education and training vouchers from \$5,000 to \$12,000 per student. The bill also would permit states, under certain conditions, to establish a grace period for foster youth to maintain their eligibility for vouchers by demonstrating progress toward completion of an education or training program. In addition, the bill would require states to make a reasonable effort to ensure that eligible youth are aware of the voucher program and would require them to use a simple, standardized application for the program. H.R. 7463 also would require HHS to issue guidance to states for carrying out the changes required under the bill.

In fiscal year 2024, states provided 14,400 vouchers averaging nearly \$3,100. Because the bill would not change the amount authorized to be appropriated for the voucher program, CBO estimates that increasing the annual limit on vouchers would not affect spending for that program.

Using information on the cost to issue guidance similar to that required by H.R. 7463, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2026-2031 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

H.R. 7529, the Fresh Starts for Foster Youth Act, would require states, when planning for foster youth to transition to adulthood, to help foster youth identify the legal issues that affect education, entry into the workforce, family relationships, and housing. The bill also would

1. Executive Order 14359, “Fostering the Future for American Children and Families,” 90 Fed. Reg. 52227 (November 13, 2025), <https://tinyurl.com/4t58duxm>.



permit states to use mandatory funds for the Chafee program to help those youth access legal services and counseling. The bill would not change the amount of funding provided for the Chafee program each year. Thus, CBO estimates that H.R. 7529 would have no effect on the federal budget.

H.R. 7655, the Support for Expectant and Parenting Foster Youth Act, would require states to provide information about the services offered through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program to foster youth who are expecting or parenting a child. That additional information would be required one year after enactment.

Funding for the MIECHV program is provided through mandatory budget authority. The Health Resources and Services Administration at HHS administers the program, which is authorized under section 511 of the Social Security Act and provides grants to states, the District of Columbia, tribes, and U.S. territories to support voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services for pregnant women and families with young children. The program was most recently reauthorized in the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which provided \$650 million for 2026 and \$800 million for 2027. There is no funding or authorization for the program after 2027. In CBO's estimation, because the additional information would not be required until late in 2027, enacting the bill would not affect spending for the MIECHV program.

H.R. 7655 also would permit states to use mandatory funds for the Chafee program to provide tailored case management services to youth who are expecting or parenting a child. The bill would not change the amount of funding provided for the Chafee program each year. Thus, CBO estimates that H.R. 7655 would have no effect on the federal budget.

H.R. 7995, the Chafee Opportunities for New Networks and Existing Connection Trust Act, would permit states to use mandatory funds for the Chafee program to help foster youth establish and maintain connections with family, mentors, peers, and supportive adults, and to help them plan for living independently. The bill would require the Secretary of HHS to issue guidance to states for carrying out those activities.

The bill would not change the amount of funding provided for the Chafee program each year. Thus, CBO estimates that H.R. 7995 would not increase direct spending.

Using information on the cost to issue guidance similar to that required by H.R. 7995, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions of the bill would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2026-2031 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations

None of the bills would affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.



Increase in Long-Term Net Direct Spending and Deficits

CBO estimates that enacting the bills would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037.

Mandates

None of the bills contain intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

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