

The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019

Introduced by: Senators Sherrod Brown & Charles Grassley

Each year, approximately 20,000 youth across the country age out of foster care. This results in a sudden and permanent transition from foster care to adulthood. Unfortunately, this sudden transition places these vulnerable young adults at risk of homelessness and housing instability due to the loss of the financial, educational, and social supports that the child welfare system provides. When youth age out of the foster care system, they are highly vulnerable to experiencing higher rates of unemployment, incarceration, human trafficking, and poor health outcomes.

Research shows that up to one-third of young people experience homelessness during their transition from foster care to adulthood. These young people have enough problems to overcome, including traumatic experiences of abuse, neglect, violence, or the loss of a parent. Safe, stable, and affordable housing should not be one of them. Maintaining stable housing helps our young people stay in school, maintain employment and access health and social services.

The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019

The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019 addresses this problem by providing foster youth better access to housing when they age out of the foster care system. It would provide Family Unification Vouchers (FUP) “on demand” to foster youth who are at risk of homelessness as they transition to adulthood. This means that young adults will be able receive a FUP voucher from HUD as they are aging out of foster care—rather than having to spend years on waiting lists for one to become available— helping them maintain housing stability and make a successful transition to independence.

The legislation also:

- Streamlines access to FUP vouchers for Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in more communities, making it easier to serve foster youth throughout the country.
- Extends a foster youth’s FUP voucher for up to an additional 24 months as they are working toward self-sufficiency, including participating in a Family Self-Sufficiency program, workforce development training, or pursuing a degree or postsecondary credentials.
- Requires coordination between PHAs and Public Child Welfare Agencies to identify eligible recipients and help housing agencies to connect youth to supportive services.
- Requires PHAs to submit information to the Secretary to monitor program outcomes .

This bill is endorsed by 80+ organizations, including: ACTION Ohio, Ohio Youth Advisory Board, National Center for Housing & Child Welfare, National Alliance to End Homeless, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Children’s Defense Fund, First Focus Campaign for Children, Ohio Children’s Alliance, Schoolhouse Connection, Youth Homes of Mid-America, National Crittenton, Foster Club, Bethany Christian Services, Children’s Home Society of America, Coalition for Family and Children Services in Iowa, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, Public Housing Authorities Directors Association, National Network for Youth