

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF FOSTERING CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS AND INCREASING ADOPTIONS ACT (H.R. 6893)**

Promotes permanent families for children and youth through relative guardianship and allows kinship guardianship payments to be paid from IV-E funds. Reference: CD09-28. Allows children who leave foster care after age 16 for kinship guardianship (or adoption) to be eligible for independent living services and education and training vouchers.

Authorizes a new grant program for activities designed to connect children in foster care with family through kinship navigator programs, intensive family-finding efforts, and family group decision-making meetings for children in the child welfare system.

Requires state agencies to exercise diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult relatives of a child within 30 days after the child is removed from the parent(s).

Allows waivers of non-safety licensing standards on a case by case basis in order to eliminate barriers to placing children with relatives and requires background checks including fingerprints on all relative guardians.

Allows states to provide care and support to youth in foster care as well as adoption and guardianship subsidy until the age of 19, 20 or 21 provided that the youth is either completing high school or an equivalency program; enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school; participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to employment; employed at least 80 hours per month or incapable of doing any of these activities due to a medical condition.

Requires child welfare agencies to help youth develop a transition plan during the 90-day period immediately before a youth exits from care at 18, 19, 20 or 21. The plan must be as detailed as the youth chooses and include specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentoring, continuing support services, work force supports and employment services.

Expands the availability of federal Title IV-E training dollars to cover training of staff not only in public agencies but in private child welfare agencies, court personnel, attorneys, guardian ad litem and CASA's.

Requires states to develop, in coordination and collaboration with the state Medicaid agency, a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for any child in foster care.

Requires states to make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same placement or if it is not in the best interest of siblings to be placed together, the state must provide frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings unless doing so would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

Extends the Adoption Incentive Grant Program for an additional five years.

De-links a child's eligibility for IV-E adoption assistance payments from the outdated AFDC income requirements which will ultimately increase the number of children whose adoption subsidy will be federally funded. Phases in over nine years.