

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 203

Recognizing “National Foster Care Month” as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 26, 2011

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing “National Foster Care Month” as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

Whereas “National Foster Care Month” was established more than 20 years ago to bring foster care issues to the forefront, to highlight the importance of permanency for every child, and to recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas the primary goal of the foster care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while working to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home for each child;

Whereas there are approximately 420,000 children living in foster care;

Whereas there are 115,000 children in foster care awaiting adoption;

Whereas 57,000 children are adopted out of foster care each year;

Whereas children of color are more likely to stay in the foster care system for longer periods of time and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas the number of available foster homes is declining, and there are only 2.8 foster homes for every 10 children in foster care;

Whereas children entering foster care often confront the widespread misperception that children in foster care are disruptive, unruly, and dangerous, even though placement in foster care is based on the actions of a parent or guardian, not the child;

Whereas foster care is intended to be a temporary placement, but children remain in the foster care system for an average of 2 years;

Whereas children in foster care experience an average of 3 different placements, which often leads to disruption of routines, and the need to change schools and move away

from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings;

Whereas more than 29,000 youth “age out” of foster care without a legal permanent connection to an adult or family;

Whereas the number of youth who “age out” of foster care has steadily increased for the past decade;

Whereas children who “age out” of foster care lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas on average, 8.5 percent of the positions in child protective services remain vacant;

Whereas due to heavy caseloads and limited resources, the average tenure for a worker in child protection services is just 3 years;

Whereas States, localities, and communities should be encouraged to invest resources in preventative and reunification services and post-permanency programs to ensure that more children in foster care are provided with safe, loving, and permanent placements;

Whereas the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351; 122 Stat. 3949) provides for new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children and families in the foster care system; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes “National Foster Care Month”
3 as an opportunity to raise awareness about the chal-
4 lenges that children in the foster care system face;

5 (2) encourages Congress to implement policy to
6 improve the lives of children in the foster care sys-
7 tem;

8 (3) supports the designation of May as “Na-
9 tional Foster Care Month”;

10 (4) acknowledges the special needs of children
11 in the foster care system;

12 (5) honors the commitment and dedication of
13 the individuals who work tirelessly to provide assist-
14 ance and services to children in the foster care sys-
15 tem; and

16 (6) reaffirms the need to continue working to
17 improve the outcomes of all children in the foster
18 care system through title IV of the Social Security
19 Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs de-
20 signed to help children in the foster care system re-
21 unite with their biological parents or, if the children
22 cannot be reunited with their biological parents, find
23 permanent, safe, and loving homes.

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