

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2952

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 2017

Ms. BASS (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. LEE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. LANGEVIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Foster Youth Men-  
5 toring Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1           (1) Research shows that mentors make a dif-  
2           ference in children’s lives. At-risk youth who have  
3           mentors are 55 percent more likely to enroll in col-  
4           lege. Students who meet regularly with their men-  
5           tors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to  
6           skip a day of school. Youth who have mentors are  
7           also 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership po-  
8           sition.

9           (2) Children that have mentors have improved  
10          relationships with adults, fewer disciplinary refer-  
11          rals, and more confidence to achieve their goals.

12          (3) In 2014, 415,129 children were in foster  
13          care. Of those children 62,108 were between the  
14          ages of 10 and 13, and 120,567 were between the  
15          ages of 14 and 18.

16          (4) Mentoring programs that serve foster chil-  
17          dren are unique and require additional consider-  
18          ations, including specialized training and support  
19          necessary to provide for consistent, long-term rela-  
20          tionships for children in care.

21          (5) Mentoring programs can be used as an ef-  
22          fective preventative or intervention strategy to sup-  
23          port positive outcomes for foster youth.

1 **SEC. 3. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN FOSTER**  
2 **CARE.**

3 Subpart 2 of part B of title IV of the Social Security  
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 629 et seq.) is amended by adding at the  
5 end the following:

6 **“SEC. 439A. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN**  
7 **FOSTER CARE.**

8 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to  
9 authorize the Secretary to make grants to eligible appli-  
10 cants to support the establishment or expansion and oper-  
11 ation of programs using a network of public and private  
12 community entities to provide mentoring for children in  
13 foster care.

14 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 “(1) CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.—The term  
16 ‘children in foster care’ means children who have  
17 been removed from the custody of their biological or  
18 adoptive parents by a State child welfare agency.

19 “(2) MENTORING.—The term ‘mentoring’  
20 means a structured, managed program—

21 “(A) in which children are appropriately  
22 matched with screened and trained adult volun-  
23 teers for consistent relationships;

24 “(B) that can include direct one-on-one,  
25 group, peer, or a combination of these types of  
26 mentoring services;

1           “(C) that involves meetings and activities  
2           on a regular basis; and

3           “(D) that is intended to meet, in part, the  
4           child’s need for involvement with a caring and  
5           supportive adult who provides a positive role  
6           model.

7           “(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-  
8           tity’ means—

9                   “(A) a nonprofit organization;

10                   “(B) a State child welfare agency;

11                   “(C) a local educational agency;

12                   “(D) an Indian tribe or a tribal organiza-  
13           tion; or

14                   “(E) a faith-based organization.

15           “(c) GRANT PROGRAM.—

16                   “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry  
17           out a program to award grants to eligible entities to  
18           support the establishment or expansion and oper-  
19           ation of programs using networks of public and pri-  
20           vate community entities to provide mentoring for  
21           children in foster care.

22                   “(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To be eli-  
23           gible for a grant under paragraph (1), an eligible en-  
24           tity shall submit to the Secretary an application con-  
25           taining the following:

1           “(A) PROGRAM DESIGN.—A description of  
2 the proposed program to be carried out using  
3 amounts provided under this grant, including—

4           “(i) the number of mentor-child  
5 matches proposed to be established and  
6 maintained annually under the program;

7           “(ii) the targeted age range of youth  
8 to be served by the program;

9           “(iii) such information as the Sec-  
10 retary may require concerning the methods  
11 to be used to recruit, screen, support, and  
12 oversee individuals participating as men-  
13 tors, and to evaluate outcomes for partici-  
14 pating children, including information nec-  
15 essary to demonstrate compliance with re-  
16 quirements established by the Secretary for  
17 the program; and

18           “(iv) such other information as the  
19 Secretary may require.

20           “(B) TRAINING.—An assurance that all  
21 mentors covered under the program will receive  
22 intensive and ongoing training in the following  
23 areas:

24           “(i) Child development, including the  
25 importance of bonding.

1           “(ii) Family dynamics, including the  
2 effects of domestic violence.

3           “(iii) The foster care system and fos-  
4 ter care principles and practices.

5           “(iv) Recognizing and reporting child  
6 abuse and neglect.

7           “(v) Confidentiality requirements for  
8 working with children in foster care.

9           “(vi) Working in coordination with the  
10 child welfare system.

11           “(vii) Other matters related to work-  
12 ing with children in foster care.

13           “(C) SCREENING.—An assurance that all  
14 mentors covered under the program are appro-  
15 priately screened and have demonstrated a will-  
16 ingness to comply with all aspects of the mentor  
17 program, including—

18           “(i) a description of the methods to be  
19 used to conduct criminal background  
20 checks on all prospective mentors; and

21           “(ii) a description of the methods to  
22 be used to ensure that the mentors are  
23 willing and able to serve as a mentor on a  
24 long-term, consistent basis.

1           “(D) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION; COORDI-  
2           NATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—A dem-  
3           onstration that, in developing and implementing  
4           the program, the eligible entity will, to the ex-  
5           tent feasible and appropriate—

6                   “(i) consult with—

7                           “(I) public and private commu-  
8                           nity entities, including religious orga-  
9                           nizations and Indian tribal organiza-  
10                          tions and urban Indian organizations;  
11                          and

12                           “(II) family members of children  
13                           who may be potential clients of the  
14                           program;

15                          “(ii) coordinate the mentoring pro-  
16                          gram and the eligible entity’s activities  
17                          with other Federal, State, and local pro-  
18                          grams serving children and youth; and

19                          “(iii) consult and coordinate with ap-  
20                          propriate Federal, State, and local correc-  
21                          tions, workforce development, and sub-  
22                          stance abuse and mental health agencies.

23           “(E) EQUAL ACCESS FOR LOCAL SERVICE  
24           PROVIDERS.—An assurance that public and pri-  
25           vate entities and nonprofit community organiza-

1 tions, including religious organizations and In-  
2 dian organizations, will be eligible to participate  
3 on an equal basis.

4 “(F) RECORDS, REPORTS, AND AUDITS.—  
5 An agreement that the eligible entity will main-  
6 tain such records, make such reports, and co-  
7 operate with such reviews or audits as the Sec-  
8 retary may find necessary for purposes of over-  
9 sight of project activities and expenditures.

10 “(G) EVALUATION.—An agreement that  
11 the eligible entity will cooperate fully with the  
12 Secretary’s ongoing and final evaluation of the  
13 program under the plan, by means including  
14 providing the Secretary access to the program,  
15 the program’s staff, program-related records  
16 and documents, and each public or private com-  
17 munity entity receiving funding under the plan.

18 “(3) CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING  
19 GRANTS.—In awarding grants under this subsection,  
20 the Secretary shall take into consideration—

21 “(A) the overall qualifications and capacity  
22 of the eligible entity and its partners to effec-  
23 tively carry out a mentoring program under this  
24 subsection;



1           “(B) the level and quality of training pro-  
2           vided to mentors under the program;

3           “(C) evidence of coordination of the pro-  
4           gram with the social services and education pro-  
5           grams of the State or political subdivision;

6           “(D) the ability of the eligible entity to  
7           provide supervision and support for mentors  
8           under the program and the youth served by  
9           such mentors;

10          “(E) the number of children in foster care  
11          served by the State or political subdivision; and

12          “(F) any other factors that the Secretary  
13          determines to be significant with respect to the  
14          need for, or the potential success of, carrying  
15          out a mentoring program under this section.

16          “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that  
17          receives a grant under this subsection may use such  
18          funds to—

19                 “(A) develop and carry out a training pro-  
20                 gram and ongoing support for mentors;

21                 “(B) recruit mentors for children in foster  
22                 care; and

23                 “(C) provide activities that will help the  
24                 development of a child in foster care who is  
25                 participating in the program.

1           “(5) GRANT AMOUNT.—In awarding grants  
2 under this subsection, the Secretary shall scale  
3 grants to account for the eligible entity’s annual  
4 budget and capacity.

5           “(6) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year  
6 after the date of enactment of this section, and an-  
7 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare and  
8 submit to Congress a report that includes the fol-  
9 lowing with respect to the year involved:

10                   “(A) A description of the number of pro-  
11 grams receiving grant awards under this sub-  
12 section.

13                   “(B) A description of the number of men-  
14 tors who serve in the programs described in  
15 subparagraph (A).

16                   “(C) A description of—

17                           “(i) the number of children in foster  
18 care who participated in mentoring pro-  
19 grams funded by the grant funds under  
20 this subsection;

21                           “(ii) data on the academic achieve-  
22 ment of the children in mentoring pro-  
23 grams funded by the grant funds under  
24 this subsection; and

1                   “(iii) the number of children in foster  
2                   care on waiting lists for such mentoring  
3                   programs.

4                   “(D) Any other information that the Sec-  
5                   retary determines to be relevant to the evalua-  
6                   tion of the program under this section.

7                   “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
8                   There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
9                   this section—

10                   “(A) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years  
11                   2018 and 2019; and

12                   “(B) such sums as may be necessary for  
13                   each succeeding fiscal year.”.

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