On March 21, Garcia allegedly took the victim to Starbucks and revealed an erotic dream she had about her. One week later, the Houston-area teacher texted the teen to say that she had broken up with her boyfriend. The following day, the pair met and ''kissed passionately,'' according to the New York Daily News.

The intimacy of the alleged relationship escalated over the following weeks. On one day, authorities say Garcia took the student to a sex shop.

''The allegation is that they did in fact drive to a store and purchase a sex toy and drive back to the defendant's apartment where they engaged in sex,'' said prosecutor Markay Stroud, according to KHOU.

The student bragged to classmates about her alleged sexual encounters, which led another student to notify school administrators, according to reports.

''She seemed nice at the time. She said she wanted to mentor my daughter, and I took her for her word. Now I'm just not as trusting in people,'' the teen's mother told KHOU last week.

Garcia is charged with sex assault of a child and indecency with a child, according to CBS Houston.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROKITA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2083, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1730

PROMOTING ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3205) to reauthorize and restructure the adoption incentives grant program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3205

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
TITLE I—ADOPTION INCENTIVES GRANT PROGRAM
Sec. 101. Extension of program through fiscal year 2016.
Sec. 102. Improvements to award structure.
Sec. 103. Renaming of program.
Sec. 104. Limitation on use of incentive payments.
Sec. 105. Increase in period for which incentive payments are available for expenditure.
Sec. 106. State report on calculation and use of savings resulting from the phase-out of eligibility requirements for adoption assistance; requirement to spend 20 percent of savings on post-adoption services.
Sec. 107. Preservation of eligibility for kinship guardianship assistance payments with a successor guardian.
Sec. 108. Effective dates.
TITLE II—EXTENSION OF FAMILY CONNECTION GRANT PROGRAM
Sec. 201. Extension of family connection grant program.
TITLE III—UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
Sec. 301. Improving the collection of unemployment insurance overpayments through tax refund offset.

TITLE I—ADOPTION INCENTIVES GRANT PROGRAM

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2016.

Section 473A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(5), by striking ''2008 through 2012'' and inserting ''2013 through 2015''; and

(2) in each of paragraphs (1)(D) and (2) of subsection (h), by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 102. IMPROVEMENTS TO AWARD STRUCTURE.

(a) ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARD.—Section 473A(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and redesignating paragraphs (3) through (5) as paragraphs (2) through (4), respectively.

(b) DATA REQUIREMENTS.—Section 473A(c)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''NUMBERS OF ADOPTIONS'' and inserting ''RATES OF ADOPTIONS AND GUARDIANSHIPS''; and

(2) by striking ''the numbers'' and all that follows through ''section,'' and inserting ''each of the rates required to be determined under this section with respect to a State and a fiscal year,''.

(c) AWARD AMOUNT.—Section 473A(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''paragraphs (2) and (3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (2)''; and

(B) by striking subparagraphs (A) through (C) and inserting the following:

''(A) $2,000, multiplied by the amount (if any) by which—

''(i) the number of foster child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year; exceeds

''(ii) the product (rounded to the nearest whole number) of—

''(I) the base rate of foster child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year; and

''(II) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year;

''(B) $4,000, multiplied by the amount (if any) by which—

''(i) the number of pre-adolescent child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year; exceeds

''(ii) the product (rounded to the nearest whole number) of—

''(I) the base rate of pre-adolescent child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year; and

''(II) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year who have attained 9 years of age but not 14 years of age; and

''(C) $8,000, multiplied by the amount (if any) by which—

''(i) the number of older child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year; exceeds

''(ii) the product (rounded to the nearest whole number) of—

''(I) the base rate of older child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year; and

''(II) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year who have attained 14 years of age; and

''(D) $1,000, multiplied by the amount (if any) by which—

''(i) the number of foster child guardianships in the State during the fiscal year; exceeds

''(ii) the product (rounded to the nearest whole number) of—

''(I) the base rate of foster child guardianships for the State for the fiscal year; and

''(II) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year.''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (3).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—Section 473A(g) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(g)) is amended by striking paragraphs (1) through (8) and inserting the following:

''(1) FOSTER CHILD ADOPTION RATE.—The term 'foster child adoption rate' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the percentage determined by dividing—

''(A) the number of foster child adoptions finalized in the State during the fiscal year; by

''(B) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year.

''(2) BASE RATE OF FOSTER CHILD ADOPTIONS.—The term 'base rate of foster child adoptions' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the lesser of—

''(A) the foster child adoption rate for the State for fiscal year 2007; or

''(B) the foster child adoption rate for the State for the then preceding fiscal year.

''(3) FOSTER CHILD ADOPTION.—The term 'foster child adoption' means the final adoption of a child who, at the time of adoptive placement, was in foster care under the supervision of the State.

''(4) PRE-ADOLESCENT CHILD ADOPTION RATE.—The term 'pre-adolescent child adoption rate' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the percentage determined by dividing—

''(A) the number of pre-adolescent child adoptions finalized in the State during the fiscal year; by

''(B) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year, who have attained 9 years of age but not 14 years of age.

''(5) BASE RATE OF PRE-ADOLESCENT CHILD ADOPTIONS.—The term 'base rate of pre-adolescent child adoptions' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the lesser of—

''(A) the pre-adolescent child adoption rate for the State for fiscal year 2007; or

''(B) the pre-adolescent child adoption rate for the State for the then preceding fiscal year.

''(6) PRE-ADOLESCENT CHILD ADOPTION.—The term 'pre-adolescent child adoption' means the final adoption of a child who has attained 9 years of age but not 14 years of age if—

''(A) at the time of the adoptive placement, the child was in foster care under the supervision of the State; or

''(B) an adoption assistance agreement was in effect under section 473 with respect to the child.

''(7) OLDER CHILD ADOPTION RATE.—The term 'older child adoption rate' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the percentage determined by dividing—

''(A) the number of older child adoptions finalized in the State during the fiscal year; by

''(B) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year, who have attained 14 years of age.

''(8) BASE RATE OF OLDER CHILD ADOPTIONS.—The term 'base rate of older child adoptions' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the lesser of—

''(A) the older child adoption rate for the State for fiscal year 2007; or

''(B) the older child adoption rate for the State for the then preceding fiscal year.

''(9) OLDER CHILD ADOPTION.—The term 'older child adoption' means the final adoption of a child who has attained 14 years of age if—

''(A) at the time of the adoptive placement, the child was in foster care under the supervision of the State; or

''(B) an adoption assistance agreement was in effect under section 473 with respect to the child.

''(10) FOSTER CHILD GUARDIANSHIP RATE.—The term 'foster child guardianship rate' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the percentage determined by dividing—

''(A) the number of foster child guardianships occurring in the State during the fiscal year; by

''(B) the number of children in foster care under the supervision of the State on the last day of the preceding fiscal year.

''(11) BASE RATE OF FOSTER CHILD GUARDIANSHIPS.—The term 'base rate of foster child guardianships' means, with respect to a State and a fiscal year, the lesser of—

''(A) the foster child guardianship rate for the State for fiscal year 2007; or

''(B) the foster child guardianship rate for the State for the then preceding fiscal year.

''(12) FOSTER CHILD GUARDIANSHIP.—The term 'foster child guardianship' means, with respect to a State, the exit of a child from foster care under the responsibility of the State to live with a legal guardian, if the State has reported to the Secretary—

''(A) that the State agency has determined that—

''(i) the child has been removed from his or her home pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement or as a result of a judicial determination to the effect that continuation in the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child;

''(ii) being returned home or adopted are not appropriate permanency options for the child;

''(iii) the child demonstrates a strong attachment to the prospective legal guardian, and the prospective legal guardian has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child; and

''(iv) if the child has attained 14 years of age, the child has been consulted regarding the legal guardianship arrangement; or

''(B) the alternative procedures used by the State to determine that legal guardianship is the appropriate option for the child.''.

SEC. 103. RENAMING OF PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The section heading of section 473A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 473A. ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 473A of such Act is amended in each of subsections (a), (d)(1), (d)(2)(A), and (d)(2)(B) (42 U.S.C. 673b(a), (d)(1), (d)(2)(A), and (d)(2)(B)) by inserting ''and legal guardianship'' after ''adoption'' each place it appears.

(2) The heading of section 473A(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(d)) is amended by inserting ''AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP'' after ''ADOPTION''.

SEC. 104. LIMITATION ON USE OF INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.

Section 473A(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(f)) is amended in the 1st sentence by inserting '', and shall use the amount to supplement, and not supplant, any Federal or non-Federal funds used to provide any service under part B or E'' before the period.

SEC. 105. INCREASE IN PERIOD FOR WHICH INCENTIVE PAYMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE.

Section 473A(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(e)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''24-MONTH'' and inserting ''36-MONTH''; and

(2) by striking ''24-month'' and inserting ''36-month''.

SEC. 106. STATE REPORT ON CALCULATION AND USE OF SAVINGS RESULTING FROM THE PHASE-OUT OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE; REQUIREMENT TO SPEND 20 PERCENT OF SAVINGS ON POST-ADOPTION SERVICES.

Section 473(a)(8) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673(a)(8)) is amended to read as follows:

''(8)(A) A State shall calculate the savings (if any) resulting from the application of paragraph (2)(A)(ii) to all applicable children for a fiscal year, using a methodology specified by the Secretary or an alternate methodology proposed by the State and approved by the Secretary.

''(B) A State shall annually report to the Secretary—

''(i) the methodology used to make the calculation described in subparagraph (A), without regard to whether any savings are found;

''(ii) the amount of any savings referred to in subparagraph (A); and

''(iii) how any such savings are spent, accounting for and reporting the spending separately from any other spending reported to the Secretary under part B or E.

''(C) The Secretary shall make all information reported pursuant to subparagraph (B) available on the website of the Department of Health and Human Services in a location easily accessible to the public.

''(D) A State shall spend an amount equal to the amount of the savings (if any) in State expenditures under this part resulting from the application of paragraph (2)(A)(ii) to all applicable children for a fiscal year, to provide to children of families any service that may be provided under this part or part B, and shall spend not less than 20 percent of any such savings on post-adoption services. Any such spending shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, any Federal or non-Federal funds used to provide any service under part B or E.''.

SEC. 107. PRESERVATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS WITH A SUCCESSOR GUARDIAN.

Section 473(d)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673(d)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) ELIGIBILITY NOT AFFECTED BY REPLACEMENT OF GUARDIAN WITH A SUCCESSOR GUARDIAN.—In the event of the death or incapacity of the relative guardian, the eligibility of a child for a kinship guardianship assistance payment under this subsection shall not be affected by reason of the replacement of the relative guardian with a successor legal guardian named in the kinship guardianship assistance agreement referred to in paragraph (1) (including in any amendment to the agreement), notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and section 471(a)(28).''.

SEC. 108. EFFECTIVE DATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2013.

(b) RESTRUCTURING AND RENAMING OF PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by sections 102 and 103 shall take effect on October 1, 2014, subject to paragraph (2).

(2) TRANSITION RULE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the total amount payable to a State under section 473A of the Social Security Act for fiscal year 2014 shall be an amount equal to ½ of the sum of—

(A) the total amount that would be payable to the State under such section for fiscal year 2014 if the amendments made by section 102 of this Act had not taken effect; and

(B) the total amount that would be payable to the State under such section for fiscal year 2014 in the absence of this paragraph.

(c) PRESERVATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS WITH A SUCCESSOR GUARDIAN.—The amendment made by section 107 shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE II—EXTENSION OF FAMILY CONNECTION GRANT PROGRAM

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF FAMILY CONNECTION GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 427(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 627(h)) is amended by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2016''.

TITLE III—UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

SEC. 301. IMPROVING THE COLLECTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE OVERPAYMENTS THROUGH TAX REFUND OFFSET.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 303 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(m) In the case of a covered unemployment compensation debt (as defined under section 6402(f)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that remains uncollected as of the date that is 2 years after the date when such debt was first incurred, the State to which such debt is owed shall take action to recover such debt under section 6402(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2015.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to urge support for H.R. 3205, the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act.

Obviously, I look old enough to be a grandfather, and I am a proud grandfather of six. Two of my grandchildren are adopted grandchildren. I was a foster grandfather. My daughter and her husband were foster parents for a while, and they ended up finding two children that they really wanted to include as part of their family.

These two children today are 9 and 10, and soon to be 10 and 11 here in the next few months. They were 3 months old when they came into the house as foster kids and now are adopted and a part of not only my daughter and her husband's family, but a part of the entire family. The Reichert household has been blessed with their presence, and they have a hope for a successful future with a loving family. This is what this bill is all about, to encourage parents across this country to adopt foster children.

I also had the opportunity, as the sheriff in King County and as a detective in King County, to watch from a very close view of what foster homes looked like. As I walked into those homes as a police officer and as a detective, I questioned how some of these places could even be foster homes. There were foster kids running away from home and ending up on the street and not having a place to call their own, not having a place where they could go to have Thanksgiving, to have Christmas, bouncing from one foster home to the next, not knowing who to call Mom or Dad. We have got to fix that. We need to encourage parents across this country to adopt our foster children, to give them that opportunity.

The other good thing about this bill is it is bipartisan. In fact, I can't think of a more important or more bipartisan topic than promoting adoption for our children. That is why we are here today. This is an area where both parties have worked together to improve outcomes for children, and it has been working.

In the 10 years from 1987 through 1997, the number of children in foster care rose dramatically, climbing from 300,000 to 537,000. That surge in foster care caseloads is one of the reasons Congress, led by current Ways and Means Chairman DAVE CAMP, passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act in 1997. That law was designed to ensure more foster children were quickly adopted when they couldn't return and live safely with their parents.

The Adoption Incentives program, created as a part of that law, was one key measure to encourage more adoptions of children from foster care. In short, it rewards States if they increase the number of children living in foster care for adoptive homes. It worked. Since the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, foster care caseloads have fallen dramatically. After peaking at 567,000 in 1999, foster care caseloads have fallen almost 30 percent. At the same time, adoptions from foster care increased in the late nineties and remained much higher than before the 1997 law's passage.

Today, we are here to support H.R. 3205, the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care, which will build upon the successes of the Adoption Incentives program. This legislation extends that program and improves the way we reward States that help more children leave foster care for loving, adoptive homes.

First, it improves the formulas behind these awards to make sure that even as foster care caseloads continue to come down, States continue to get awards for moving children into adoptive homes.

Second, it continues to promote the type of adoptions that have proven hardest to achieve by adding a special award for the adoption of teenage children. We should never give up on trying to find lifelong homes for these children, and this legislation steps up the incentives for States to do just that.

Third, we add a new award for guardianship, which is an important development in the child welfare world that is allowing thousands of children to leave foster care and live safely with relatives. This bill also requires States to focus funds on post-adoption services, which help children and families after adoptions have been finalized.

Finally, the bill would extend for 3 years the Family Connection Grant program that is focused on helping children in foster care reconnect with family members. Because funding for that program needs to be offset, we included a commonsense pay-for, which builds on a current procedure for recovering overpayments of unemployment insurance benefits. Under current law, States may offset Federal income tax refunds to collect these overpayments, and two-thirds of States do that today. This legislation would require all States to use this procedure, which will increase overpayment recovery and results in this legislation reducing the deficit by $24 million over the next 10 years.

As chairman of the Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee with jurisdiction over this program, I am pleased to report that the process behind developing this bill has been totally bipartisan and open. First, we held a subcommittee hearing in February featuring nonpartisan experts on adoption and child welfare. We then worked together with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to develop draft legislation, which was made publicly available in early August. We then worked together to incorporate that public feedback, improving in many ways the legislation that Chairman CAMP and I and Ranking Members LEVIN and DOGGETT introduced on September 27.

I want to thank the subcommittee's ranking member, Mr. DOGGETT, who joins me on the floor this evening, as well as Chairman CAMP and Ranking Member LEVIN, for their support of this legislation and for their help throughout this development. This will move us a step forward and closer to ensuring that more children living in the United States live in permanent, loving homes, and receive the support they deserve.

I invite all Members to join us in supporting this important bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Thank you, Chairman REICHERT and Chairman CAMP.

Mr. Speaker, abused and neglected children in the foster care system are among the most vulnerable children in our communities. These children have the same needs, desires, and dreams as all young people. They need a safe and loving home. They want and deserve the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to fully experience life. A successful adoption provides foster children with these necessities and gives them the opportunity to achieve their full God-given potential.

Investing in the success of our foster children is not only good for them; but in so many communities, it is the difference between those young people becoming a community asset and a community liability. It is about reducing future unemployment, homelessness, teen pregnancy, and incarceration.

This bill contributes to our continuing efforts to address these issues and to provide permanent homes for abused and neglected children. I am pleased that Mr. LEVIN and I could work with Chairman CAMP and Chairman REICHERT to develop this bipartisan legislation to not only extend some important programs, but to make a number of positive changes. Mr. REICHERT has outlined some of these. I would add attention to a provision that I authored to help ensure that children don't lose assistance simply because their guardian dies.

As a longtime member of the Congressional Coalition of Adoption and a member of the Foster Youth Caucus, I am pleased that we could take these steps in the right direction on a bipartisan basis to help these young people. The legislation both continues and improves the incentives now provided to the States when they increase the rate at which foster children, who cannot return home, find an adoptive family. These new incentives will now be even more focused on the promotion of adoption of older foster children, who are sometimes a bit more difficult to place and who have found difficulty in securing a permanent home.

Additionally, for the first time, the bill will reward States for helping youth leave foster care to live with a permanent legal guardian. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the link between family and children in foster care, the legislation also extends a relatively new, but expiring, program known as the Family Connection

Grants. These grants go out on a competitive basis to local organizations and State agencies to support various approaches for improving connections between foster families and their children, including linking grandparents to supports and services when they become the primary caregivers for children who would otherwise be in foster care.

Another provision that I care about greatly is strengthening of the requirement that adoption funding be spent on promoting adoption rather than being diverted to other purposes. Most notably, this legislation requires States to fully reinvest the funds into post-adoption services and other child welfare activities when these amounts were made available by an increase in Federal funding for adoption support.

In total, this legislation will continue the progress we have made over the last 15 years in moving foster children into permanent homes. In my home State of Texas, San Antonio has been viewed as a particular model of success for adoption. Each month, Bexar County hosts an adoption day event that allows families to complete their adoptions in a single day. These are proceedings that have allowed children to have shorter stays in foster care and to move more quickly into stable homes. Judges in Bexar County understand that they are responsible for getting children who experience abuse and neglect into a safe foster environment and are responsible for placing that child with a permanent family if it does not become safe for the child to return home.

These improvements in the local adoption system have been encouraged and utilized by important local child advocates like District Judge Peter Sakai and CASA San Antonio. They have allowed for faster and more efficient placement of foster youth into permanent families.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this bipartisan effort, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee for yielding and for his leadership on this very important issue.

I rise in support of this legislation, which is designed to encourage the adoption of more children from foster care.

I spent much of my career promoting adoption of children by loving parents because every child deserves a loving and safe home. As an attorney in private practice, I worked with parents and children in the foster care system. Those sorts of experiences provided much of the background for changes in landmark adoption legislation I and my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee crafted in 1997 called the Adoption and Safe Families Act. That legislation streamlined the adoption process to help more children in foster care quickly move into permanent adoptive homes. It also for the first time offered incentives to States to safely increase the number of children adopted from foster care.

It worked. In the decade following that legislation, the number of U.S. children adopted from foster care increased by 71 percent. In the years since, adoptions have continued to remain higher even as the foster care caseload started to decline.

□ 1745

Overall, almost 300 children have been adopted as a result of the increases in adoptions since 1997. One study even estimated that the Federal Government saved $1 billion over 8 years by ensuring children were adopted instead of remaining in foster care.

That is the successful incentive program this legislation extends and updates. We add a new award for States that increase adoptions of older children, who are the hardest to adopt and have the worst outcomes if they ''emancipate'' from foster care without a family to call their own. We also add a new award for increases in guardianship, when family members step up to care for their nieces and nephews, grandsons and granddaughters. And this bill ensures States maintain their commitment to post-adoption and related services so that children may truly have a family forever.

I note that this legislation is fully paid for by a simple and real reform requiring States to reduce Federal income tax refunds when someone wrongly gets an overpayment for unemployment benefits. Those savings not only cover the cost of this legislation, but reduce the deficit by $24 million over the next 10 years. That is a win-win for children, for families, and for taxpayers alike.

The bottom line is this: children in foster care deserve a place to call home, not just for a few months or years, but for good. We have already seen great progress in increasing adoptions since the Adoption Incentives program was created in 1997, and it is our hope that we can continue this progress with this bill.

I thank my colleagues who joined me in introducing this legislation: Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. REICHERT of Washington State, and Mr. DOGGETT of Texas. They are all leaders on this issue in the committee and this House, and I value their help in developing and advancing this legislation.

I would also like to recognize the public comment we received in crafting this bill. A draft bill was posted on the Ways and Means Committee Web site in August, and the public was given a month to provide their thoughts on how to ensure more children are adopted. The bill we are considering today incorporates many of those suggestions, and we are grateful for the public's comments and their participation in this process.

I encourage all of my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill in the House, and I hope the Senate will act as soon as they can so we can continue to move even more children from foster care into permanent, loving homes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, surely no Member of the House has expressed more interest in this subject than the founder of the Foster Youth Caucus, our colleague from California (Ms. BASS), to whom I yield 3 minutes.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Ranking Member DOGGETT.

I rise today in support of the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act.

First, I would like to commend Chairman CAMP and Chairman REICHERT and Ranking Members LEVIN and DOGGETT for their great work on this legislation and their ongoing commitment to our Nation's foster youth. As the cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth and the Congressional Caucus on Adoption, I sincerely appreciate your leadership and partnership on this issue.

Since 1997, when the Adoption Incentives legislation became law, we have seen a significant reduction of the number of kids in foster care and, more importantly, an increased number of kids in forever families; yet there are still over 400,000 children in our Nation's child welfare system, many awaiting the stability and love of a permanent family.

Unfortunately, studies show that foster youth, especially those who ''age out,'' are much more likely to experience poverty, unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, and compromised health after they leave foster care. Each year, nearly 30,000 teenagers age out of foster care without a permanent family. We know that this is unfair and unacceptable. We must strengthen policies that help to find forever families for our Nation's foster children, especially our older youth.

I would like to focus my remarks on one of the noteworthy aspects of the bill—the enhanced support for legal guardianship. By making this investment, we will ultimately help more kids find permanent families, often with relatives.

Today's foster care system looks much different than the child welfare system of previous decades. While children continue to be placed in foster homes with strangers or in group homes, more than half are placed with a relative caregiver, a grandmother, aunt, uncle, or older sibling. In fact, in my district in Los Angeles, relative caregivers are the largest foster care providers. Research shows that foster placement with relatives is good for children. They often allow children to stay in their schools, receive continued support from their community and culture, and feel connected to families that continue to love them.

Despite the importance of relative caregivers, they face unique obstacles. Becoming a caregiver changes lives in every way—physically, emotionally, and financially. Stable middle class families or seniors who live on their life savings are often pushed to the brink of poverty because they have accepted the unexpected financial burden of caring for a child. As a Nation, we should take the extra steps needed to support family members that heroically step up to care for children in times of need.

Additionally, I strongly support the Family Connection Grants reauthorized in this bill. These grants help to strengthen families, support kinship care, and prevent youth from entering or reentering foster care.

Before my time in elected office, I was honored to advocate for kinship and guardianship resources alongside relative caregivers at the Community Coalition's Kinship in Action program. Today, I am greatly encouraged that the bill before us encourages permanent families of all kinds, supporting both adoption and guardianship throughout the Nation.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, nearly 3,000 Hoosier children are currently eligible for adoption while living in foster care. Now, I know all of us can agree that these children and the over 100,000 children in the United States eligible for adoption deserve a stable, permanent, and loving home. While there is no doubt our foster care programs provide an essential service, I strongly believe, as a proud father of four young children and as someone who used to provide free legal services to those wanting to adopt, that there can be no substitute for the care a loving family can provide.

Whether it is living with a family member or being adopted into a new family, we must do everything in our powers to see that children everywhere receive the best upbringing possible. This legislation represents a step forward in finding these children caring and supportive homes. By extending the Adoption Incentives program, we effectively encourage and incentivize States to help adopt more children out of foster care so these children can lead happy, healthy, and successful lives.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the managers of this bill, the gentleman from Washington and the gentleman from Texas, my colleague from, we would say on the floor, the great State of Texas.

This is a very important measure that I have had an opportunity to engage in. A couple of years back—I would say more years than I would like to remember—former Congressman Mike Andrews and myself were cochairs of the Foster Grandparents Program in Houston, and it drew me to the importance of both foster care and adoption.

I have also spent some time with Senator MARY LANDRIEU, who, as many know, is a very strong advocate of the idea of adoption and legal guardianship for children in foster care.

One of the new phenomenons that we are seeing more and more is the phenomenon of aging out for foster care children; and so I rise today to support H.R. 3205 and compliment the cochairs of the Foster Care Caucus, of which I am a member, Congresswoman BASS and cochair MARINO, and really ask my colleagues to support this important initiative. I am very proud to cosponsor this legislation; and as a cochair and founder of the Congressional Childrens Caucus, now almost 20 years, I would like to say I strongly support it.

The more times that we can say something positive about children in a bipartisan way on the floor of the House, the more of a national statement and commitment is seen by those who are in the various venues in our States and county government and city government who work every day to protect our children. Foster care serves our children and families in a temporary placement by providing suitable, permanent living. Most children are placed in foster care temporarily due to parental abuse and neglect.

In Harris County, my county in Texas, 2,388 children were taken into protective custody in 2011. The average number of children in foster care each month in Harris County is 5,300. 2,440 children in Child Protective Service custody were placed in permanent living in Harris County in 2011.

This is the right direction to go. As of September 30, 2012, 1,740 children in the Houston region are still waiting to be adopted; and, on average, children stay in the system for almost 3 years before either being reunited with their families or adopted.

What a wonderful statement to know that there are families or adults that love you. Many times, those adoptions are amongst family members. Many times, the grandparents take the children. Let's thank them, because that was the program I was involved in, to give R and R, rest, to the grandparents who foster care for many, many children.

Frequent moves, different schools, our children need loving care. They need stability. Many times these foster parents provide that kind of stability. Many foster children have been separated not only from their parents, but from their siblings, and this can be very detrimental socially, emotionally, and psychologically.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. DOGGETT. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So this legislation, which reauthorizes and restructures the Adoption Incentives Grant Program, will help enhance, cultivate, and advance the foster care system by making it a program that is beneficial.

Mr. Speaker, I was not able to come to the floor for H.R. 2083. I also, as a cochair of the Congressional Childrens Caucus, focusing on the abuse of children, want to salute and support the Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act and ask this floor to support both of these initiatives, because when we speak for children, we speak for America.

I hope that we will also see, soon, antibullying and prevention legislation on the floor, Mr. Speaker, to make that public statement.

I thank the gentleman for his yielding, and I want to salute Little Audrey's in Houston for the work they have done for the children in Houston, Texas. Thank you, Alma, very much for the work you have done.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Adoption and Foster Care Caucuses and as Chair of the Congressional Childrens Caucus, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3205, the "Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act."

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill because it promotes adoption, protects children and provides grant funding for the foster care system.

Foster care serves our children and families as a temporary placement until a suitable permanent living arrangement is made that best fits the child.

Most children are placed in foster care temporarily due to parental abuse or neglect. In Harris County, 2,388 children were taken into protective custody in 2011. The average number of children in foster care each month in Harris County is 5,300.

In addition, 2,440 children in Children's Protective Service (CPS) custody were placed in a permanent living arrangement in Harris County in 2011. With court approval, 28.3 percent of the children were returned to their own families, 26.5 percent were placed with relatives, and 34.4 percent were placed in adoptive homes.

As of September 31, 2012, 1,740 children in the Houston Region are still waiting to be adopted (1,503 in Harris County).

On average, children stay in the system for almost three years before either being reunited with their families or adopted. Children have on average three different foster care placements.

Frequent moves in and out of the homes of strangers can be profoundly unsettling and quite difficult for children, and it is not uncommon to hear of children who have been in 20 or 30 different homes during their time in foster care.

Many foster children have been separated not only from their parents, but from their siblings, which can be very detrimental to a child socially, emotionally and psychologically.

Many children in foster care unfortunately have to undergo multiple placement changes several times while in foster care due to a wide range of factors such as licensing standards violations, court rulings, behavioral

issues, or changes in the foster home or facility.

In my home city of Houston, CPS does a remarkable job increase in providing placement options that will better match the needs of each individual child that goes through the foster care system.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3205 reauthorizes and restructures the adoption incentives grant program. These grant funds will help enhance, cultivate, and advance the foster care system by making it a program that is beneficial while effectively serving children. These resources will give children in foster care the opportunity to flourish in whatever living placement they are given.

Adoption is more than just a legal process, it is an emotional, social and psychological process in which children who have been removed from their biological parents become full and permanent legal members of another family. Adoption has many facets and touches people in different ways.

This bill promotes adoption and will help ensure that people who are willing and able to serve will have the necessary information and means to become legal guardians of foster children in need of placement.

Mr. Speaker, children are our hope for a better tomorrow, but it is up to us to promote adoption so that children may have legal guardians who will properly care for them and help them know the joy and security that comes with being a member of a loving family.

For these reasons, I strongly support H.R. 3205. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, hopefully the Senate will respond to our strong show of bipartisan support by moving this legislation this year.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I will insert in the RECORD letters of support for this legislation from Christian Heritage, Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness, Seneca Family of Agencies, The Donaldson Adoption Institute, Hillside Family of Agencies, and Voice for Adoption.

I want to echo the words of Mr. DOGGETT. I hope the Senate does act on this.

There are three things that I would like to just highlight as we wrap up this evening's discussion on foster care, three things that this bill does: one, it cuts the deficit; two, amazingly, in this time of partisanship, this is a true bipartisan moment that we all ought to stop, pause, and take recognition of.

This is about children. It cuts the deficit, and this is one that we can all come together and support. Why? Because it is for our kids. It is for the kids across America who need a home.

I mentioned two of my grandchildren who are foster children, were foster children, are now adopted, but they were even more special. They were drug-addicted babies, crack cocaine, heroin, and meth, and these kids today have a home.

As a grandparent, standing on the sidelines of a soccer game watching Emma and Briar play soccer, knowing where they came from, the moms lived on the streets, drug-addicted moms, these kids have hope. They have a future. When the game is over, they run to the sidelines and they yell, ''Papa.'' It is the greatest feeling in the world.

We owe that kind of life to every foster child.

I yield back the balance of my time.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE,
September 30, 2013.

Chairman DAVE CAMP,
House of Representatives,
Washington DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CAMP: I am writing in support of the Fostering Connections Grants that support Family Finding research and the Adoptions Incentives program.

Kevin Campbell, founder of Family Finding; the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; and Christian Heritage, a nonprofit, faith-based organization, have been working together in a collaborative effort to find permanency for children who have been languishing in Nebraska's foster care system.

The principles of Family Finding are: 1. Every child has a family and they CAN be found, 2. Loneliness can be devastating, even dangerous, and is experienced by most children, 3. A meaningful connection to family helps a child develop a sense of belonging. and 4. The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for children is meaningful, lifelong connections to family.

Mr. Campbell began working with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Christian Heritage in April of this year. We have already learned the following: 1. Families for Nebraska's children in foster care are larger than we had initially believed. 2. More family members are willing to offer relationships of support than previously believed. 3. More fathers are willing to come forward and offer support to their children than originally anticipated, and 4. Family members have been willing to make offers of legal permanency EVEN for youth with the most complex needs.

How effective are the Family Finding services in Nebraska? To date, 100 percent of the children whose cases have completed Phase Three (of six phases) now have a Lifetime Network of Unconditional Support consisting of five or more family members, and 82 percent of the children who have completed Phase Three have at least one person identified who is willing to provide permanency. This program is tremendously successful and we urge your support of continued funding for the Fostering Connections grants

Respectfully yours,

GREGG NICKLAS,
Co-CEO.

FAMILY FINDING,
Oakland, CA, September 30, 2013.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE OFFICE,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DAVE CAMP AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: I am writing to lend my support to the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act, which would reauthorize the existing program as well as provide more resources and flexibility for states working toward improved permanency for children in the foster care system.

As I outlined in my recommendations to the United States Senate Committee on Finance in April, the Adoption Incentive Grants and other fiscal rewards have clearly increased the number of adoptions from and reduced the number of children in foster care. This suggests that incentives made available to states that reward results have significant impact. A focus on adoption rates will incentivize states to work toward adoptions and legal guardianships in an environment of declining foster care caseloads.

Extending the Family Connection Grants is also a critical component of the Act. Family Connections Grants are currently supporting the development of innovative practice models which incorporate Family Finding with trauma-informed practices—models that attend to grief and the multiple losses that children experience by entering and remaining in care, and other key family involvement strategies such as Family Group Decision Making and Safety Organized Practice—to better serve children in foster care. These investments serve as incubators which promote innovation and are necessary to advance practice, as current funding does not allow for or support such experiments. As Brian Samuels, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, stated, two of the primary keys to attaining safety, permanence and well-being for children and youth in foster care are the promotion of healthy relationships and the prioritization of kinship care. The Family Finding approach squarely targets and successfully achieves these goals.

In my work across the county providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to local child welfare agencies, statewide child welfare entities, and private, nonprofit organizations, I am convinced that there is urgent need to continue to invest in innovations in practice that respond to the continued growth in the presence of older adolescents in the out-of-home care system as well as the increase in the number of youth aging out of care. Significant progress in learning has come about through the original discretionary grants, This is not the time to stop our efforts on behalf of these youth and families.

Thank you for considering reauthorizing the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act. Every day that a child is in care is a crisis for that child, and legislative efforts that work toward reducing length of time in care, improving adoption and legal guardianship rates, and connecting children and youth to family members are of utmost importance.

Sincerely,

KEVIN A. CAMPBELL,
Founder, Center for Family Finding and Youth Permanency.

SENECA,
Oakland, CA, September 30, 2013.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE OFFICE,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DAVE CAMP AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Promoting Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act. We believe this bill is an important step in continuing progress toward ensuring every child grows up with a committed and loving family and we value the leadership the Committee has shown in pursuing this goal.

Seneca Family of Agencies was founded in 1985 with a dedication to providing unconditional care to the most struggling youth served by California's child welfare system. Recognizing that far too many youth with significant mental health challenges were growing up in institutional settings lacking any connection to their family and communities, Seneca was formed to provide youth with the consistent and caring therapeutic

environments and relationships that promote their healing from histories of dramatic trauma and loss. Each year our agency serves thousands of children and families, with the mission to help children and families succeed through their most difficult times.

As our agency and both state and federal policy have evolved, our practice of unconditional care has grown to include many of the services that are supported with the Promoting Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act, including post-adoption support services and Family Finding efforts. Most recently, our agency has been the recipient of a federal Family Connections Grant to provide integrated Family Finding and Family Group Decision Making services in collaboration with the San Francisco Human Service Agency. This grant has been an integral component of efforts to further promote stable and permanent placements of youth with parents and relatives system-wide. Still in the early stages of implementation, the project has already elicited important lessons on how to effectively embed permanency-focused services within large public systems of care. These lessons have influenced practice within our agency and San Francisco County more broadly. Dissemination of this information to the national human service community has already begun. Projects funded by the Family Connections grants, such as these, have important potential to test innovative practices and influence the national community with practices that promote permanency and youth wellbeing.

We appreciate the value the Committee on Ways and Means has placed on supporting the wellbeing and stability of foster youth. The Promoting Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act encourages the alignment of resources with widely embraced values and goals that every child deserves to be loved and cared for by safe and stable families and we are pleased to offer our support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

KEN BERRICK,
CEO/President,
Seneca Family of Agencies.

THE DONALDSON ADOPTION INSTITUTE,
New York, NY, September 30, 2013.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

HON. MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: The Donaldson Adoption Institute is delighted to support the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act (H.R. 3205). The Adoption Institute is an independent, nonpartisan policy and education nonprofit organization that conducts research and analysis in order to improve federal and state adoption-related laws, policies and practices. Our ''Keeping the Promise'' initiative, for instance, aims to expand an essential tool to enable children in foster care to join, and remain in, permanent, safe and loving families: adoption support and preservation services.

The Adoption Institute is pleased that H.R. 3205 reauthorizes the Adoption Incentives program through FY2016, restructures awards to incentivize increasing adoptions of pre-adolescent and older children, and establishes a new award for increases in the rate of children leaving foster care for legal guardianship. We also applaud the mandate that states report savings resulting from the adoption assistance-income eligibility delink and reinvestments in child welfare, as well as spend a minimum of 20 percent of savings on post-adoption services for children adopted from care.

We appreciate the Committee's bipartisan efforts, solicitation of expert testimony, and consideration of comments on the August draft proposal that it notes ''informed several changes made to the bipartisan legislation introduced.'' We also are glad to see that the House schedule indicates that the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act may be considered this week on the House Floor.

We are communicating the Institute's support of H.R. 3205 to our stakeholders and asking them to contact their Members for their support as well.

Thank you for your leadership; it is truly a testament to the Committee's commitment to the over 100,000 children still waiting in temporary care for permanent families. Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

ADAM PERTMAN,
Executive Director,
Donaldson Adoption Institute.
RUTH MCROY,
Board Member,
Senior Research Fellow.

HILLSIDE,
Rochester, NY, October 7, 2013.

Hon. DAVE CAMP, Chairman,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. SANDER LEVIN, Ranking Member,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. DAVE REICHERT, Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. LLOYD DOGGETT, Ranking Member,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES CAMP, LEVIN, REICHERT, DOGGETT: Hillside Family of Agencies is pleased to extend our support and appreciation to members of the Ways and Means Committee for your recent bipartisan bill, the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act (H.R. 3205). Thank you for your joint effort to reauthorize and improve the federal Adoption Incentives Program. The Committee has a long history of bipartisan leadership on child welfare issues and we commend you for your continued work on behalf of vulnerable children and families.

Hillside Family of Agencies is a leading provider of child welfare, mental health, youth development, juvenile justice, special education, and developmental disabilities services, including more than 120 services to children and families at more than 40 locations across Western and Central New York and in Prince George's County, Maryland.

In the United States today, more than 102,000 children in foster care are waiting to be adopted. At the same time, thousands of families across the country are willing to open their hearts and homes to adopt children from the child welfare system. Hillside Family of Agencies works to bring children and families together through our Adoption and Family Finding efforts. We operate under the philosophy that all children deserve permanency and that each child has the right and potential to have a safe, loving, forever family. We are committed to building collaborative relationships with families, professionals, and communities to create a sense of urgency in providing permanence so that every child is able to know and grow within a family of their own.

The long term success of families who adopt this nation's waiting children is dependent upon their ability to meet the needs of those who have experienced prior abuse and/or neglect. Families must have access to community resources that enable them to meet the significant emotional and behavioral challenges that children who have suffered from early and repeated trauma often bring to their families. For this reason, Hillside Family of Agencies has been a strong advocate for increased investments into permanency efforts children and youth in foster care, and for accessible, comprehensive post adoption services for all adoptive families. We have had considerable experience and success in finding adoptive families for children in foster care and in supporting those families when funding is available for post adoption services.

Hillside Family of Agencies is especially grateful for the Committee's recent actions to: Reauthorize the program and include a greater emphasis on adoption rate increases; Establish a greater incentive for states who increase permanency for older youth in foster care; Establish, for the first time, an incentive for increased guardianship placements; Require HHS and states to calculate savings from the Title IV–E adoption assistance ''de-link,'' resulting from the Fostering Connections Act of 2008; Require not less than 20 percent of states adoption assistance ''de-link'' savings be invested into post adoption services; Extension of the Family Connection Grants.

We appreciate the process that the Committee undertook over the past several months to identify potential areas of improvement, both through the holding of oversight hearings and the solicitation of public feedback on the draft proposal that was shared in August 2013. We applaud your work to incorporate improvements suggested by thoughtful and concerned stakeholders.

Adoption is permanent, irrevocable, and lifelong. Hillside Family of Agencies is committed to supporting families and keeping them intact throughout their lifetimes. On behalf of the children and families we serve, we thank you.

Sincerely,

DENNIS RICHARDSON,
President and CEO,
Hillside Family of Agencies.

VOICE FOR ADOPTION,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2013.

Hon. DAVE CAMP, Chairman,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. DAVE REICHERT, Chairman,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. SANDER LEVIN, Ranking Member,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. LLOYD DOGGETT, Ranking Member,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES CAMP, LEVIN, REICHERT, DOGGETT: Voice for Adoption (VFA) is pleased to extend our support and appreciation to members of the Ways and Means Committee for your recent bipartisan bill, the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act (H.R. 3205). Thank you for your joint effort to reauthorize and improve the federal Adoption Incentives Program. This Committee has a long history of bipartisan leadership on child welfare issues and we commend you for your continued work on behalf of vulnerable children and families.

VFA is an advocacy organization whose mission is to raise awareness of the needs of the 102,000 children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted and the families that adopt from public child welfare. We believe that every child deserves a family; as a nation we must ensure that children's safety and permanency is always paramount. Secondly, we must ensure that families who commit to loving and raising children who have experienced prior abuse and/or neglect are equipped to meet the significant emotional and behavioral needs that their children can sometimes present. For these reasons, VFA has been a strong advocate for

both, increased investments into permanency—especially for the longest waiting children and older youth in foster care—and for greater post-adoption services.

VFA's members are especially grateful for the Committees recent actions to: Reauthorize the program and include a greater emphasis on adoption rate increases; Establish a greater incentive for states who increase permanency for older youth in foster care; Establish, for the first time, an incentive for increased guardianship placements; Require HHS and states to calculate savings resulting from the title IV–E adoption assistance ''de-link'', resulting from the Fostering Connections Act of 2008; Require not less than 20 percent of states adoption assistance ''de-link'' savings be invested into post-adoption services; Extension of the Family Connections Grants.

We would also like to thank you for the process that the Committee took over the past several months to hear about ways that this program could be improved, both through holding oversight hearings and soliciting public feedback on the draft proposal that was shared in August 2013. We applaud your work to incorporate improvements suggested by stakeholders and we look forward to working with you going forward.

Sincerely,

NICOLE DOBBINS,
Executive Director.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3205.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Suspending the rules and passing:

H.R. 185, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3205, by the yeas and nays; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PAUL BROWN UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 185) to designate the United States courthouse located at 101 East Pecan Street in Sherman, Texas, as the ''Paul Brown United States Courthouse,'' on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 402, nays 1, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 551]

YEAS—402

Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—27

Aderholt
Blumenauer
Broun (GA)
Calvert
Campbell
Cárdenas
Cicilline
Davis, Danny
Fincher
Gingrey (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grijalva
Grimm
Hanna
Herrera Beutler
Honda
Marino
McCarthy (NY)
Nugent
Palazzo
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Shimkus
Van Hollen
Wilson (SC)

□ 1856

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.