



Rep. Don Bacon introduces H. R. 4378 - Protecting Sibling Relationships in Foster Care Act

In an effort to ensure siblings are kept together in foster care placements, Rep. Bacon introduced H.R. 4378 on July 9, 2021.

The press release associated to the bill's filing quoted Rep. Bacon as stating: "Keeping siblings together in the foster care system significantly increases their chance of having positive life outcomes. As a foster to adoptive parent of a sibling group, I believe this bill will go a long way towards helping address the unique challenges faced by sibling groups with large numbers, wide age ranges, and complex needs."

Co-sponsors at time of filing included: Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA), Rep. James R. Levin (D-RI-2) and Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI-14). Subsequently, Rep. Mark Wayne Mulin (R-OK-2) signed on as a co-sponsor on July 13, 2021.

According to the press release: "The legislation would authorize the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a competitive grant pilot program to encourage the development of such specialized foster care programs and would authorize \$10 million over a five-year period for the demonstration program, which would be awarded to five applicants, according to information provided by Rep. Bacon's office.

Text for H.R. 4378 reads:

[To encourage the development of specialized foster care programs designed specifically for large sibling groups, sibling groups with a wide age range, and sibling groups with complex needs].

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 9, 2021

Mr. Bacon (for himself, Ms. Bass, Mr. Langevin, and Mrs. Lawrence) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To encourage the development of specialized foster care programs designed specifically for large sibling groups, sibling groups with a wide age range, and sibling groups with complex needs.

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 “Protecting Sibling Relationships in Foster Care Act”.

SEC. 2. COMPETITIVE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE PROGRAMS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR LARGE SIBLING GROUPS, SIBLING GROUPS WITH A WIDE AGE RANGE, AND SIBLING GROUPS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS.

(a) General.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred as the “Secretary”) shall establish a competitive grant pilot program under which, during the 5-year period that begins with the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall make not more than 5 grants to eligible entities who have applied therefor to encourage the development of specialized foster care programs designed specifically for groups of 3 or more siblings, sibling groups with a wide age range, and sibling groups with, or that include a youth with, complex needs. For purposes of the preceding sentence, a youth has complex needs if the youth exhibits challenging or risky behaviors that could cause themselves or others serious harm, has mental health needs of such severity that the participation of the youth in daily life may be impaired either with or without services being rendered to help, has a disability (as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act), or has an illness that requires continuous monitoring or is life-threatening, and complex needs include issues that may arise from siblings in foster care with a different parent, which could impact the ability of the siblings to be placed together, or from a youth with a history of trauma.

(b) Eligible Entity.—In this section, the term “eligible entity” means a State child welfare agency, a State, tribal, or local agency, a faith- or community-based organization, or a nonprofit organization that has expertise and demonstrated experience, as well as state supervision, in administering a foster care program.

(c) Applications.—An eligible entity that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application that includes—

- (1) a description of how funds received under the grant will be used to place together sibling groups described in subsection (a);
- (2) a description of the specialized foster care program involved, and how the program is designed for the placement of sibling groups described in subsection (a);

(3) data describing the challenges of placing, and number of, sibling groups described in subsection (a) that are awaiting placements; and

(4) such other information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(d) Use Of Funds. —A recipient of a grant under this section may use the grant funds only to develop specialized foster care programs which are—

(1) designed to identify available placements for, and place together, sibling groups described in subsection (a); and

(2) evidence-based, and proven to substantially increase joint sibling placements.

(e) Reporting Requirement. —As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, the grant recipient shall submit to the Secretary a written report on the number of children in the specialized foster care program involved, the size of the sibling groups served by the program, the methods used to place children with their siblings under the program, and the outcomes of the placements.

(f) Regulations. —The Secretary may prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section.

(g) Limitations On Authorization Of Appropriations. —To carry out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary not more than \$10,000,000, which is authorized to remain available during the 5-year period referred to in subsection (a).

[Note: The proposed legislation makes no reference to the numbers of children that can be placed together at any one time in a foster family home. Sadly, sibling groups were previously often placed in children’s homes. Under current provision of FFPSA, reimbursements for those placements are no longer a viable option.]

2021 CORE National Conference October 12-14, 2021



Mooseheart Child City School

(Mooseheart is a residential childcare facility, located on a 1,000-acre campus 38 miles west of Chicago.)

This year’s lineup of topics and presenters has much to offer.

- A Failing System: The Inadequacy of “Best Interests of the Child” in Modern Child Welfare - Presenter: Dr. Michael Smith, Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries
- Leadership and Self-Deception - Presenter: Dan Adams, Cal Farley’s
- Serving Children, But Doing It Differently - Presenter: Dr. Myrle Grate, Sunnybrook Children’s Home

- The Power of Shared Language - Presenter: Trey Oakley, Methodist Children's Home
- Mooseheart Model of Care - Presenters: Brianna Dowell & Alice Daneels, Mooseheart Child City & School
- Introduction to Legislative Change and Impacting Regulations - Presenter: Sean Milner, Baptist Children's Village
- Cottage Parent Recruitment, Training, and Retention - Presenter: Suzanne Wright - Cal Farley's
- Finding the Silver Lining of COVID: Engaging Families During the Pandemic - Presenter: Jay Garvey
- Keeping Our Children Safe - Presenters Alice Daneels, Kyle Rife & Brianna Dowell
- Attachment Management - Presenter Joshua Sprock, Cal Farley's

[Included in the program is the Catherine Hershey Awards. The keynote speaker for the Award's Luncheon is Gary Urwiler, alumni and Executive Director of Mooseheart, Child City and School].

2021 National CORE Conference Registration is Available on the CORE Website



LODGING : The Conference Hotel is MyPlace - Chicago West/North Aurora, Illinois

The room rate for the conference is set for \$80 a night. There are a few ways to reserve hotel rooms for the conference:

- 1.) The following direct link may be used for reservations:

[BOOK A HOTEL RESERVATION](#)

2.) Guests can also go to the hotel website which is myplacehotels.com, enter preferred arrival and departure dates for *Chicago West/North Aurora, IL*, and there is an area where you can enter a promo/group code. Note, please be sure to enter it as a **Group code**. The conference group code for CORE is **MOOSE2021**. (Spelling includes three O's.) Once you enter the group code, it will display available rooms in the CORE block at the special rate.

3.) Reservations can also be made by calling the hotel at (630) 256-8485. The CORE group name is: MOOSEHEART 2021. Attendees to the conference will need to arrive on or before Monday, October 11, as the conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. the following morning.

2021 Catherine Hershey Residential Excellence Awards

With its inception in 2005, the Catherine Hershey Awards are national awards specifically for the residential education field. Administered by CORE, the Coalition for Residential Excellence, the awards are sponsored by the Milton Hershey School. Judges are individuals from the residential field who rank all submitted nominations with personal and program information removed. The awards honor outstanding staff, students, and supporters whose tireless dedication and steadfast contributions exemplify the essence of Residential Excellence: affording youth from all backgrounds the opportunities to help them navigate a solid course in education, career, relationships...and in life.

Awards will be awarded in the following categories:

- Catherine Hershey Award Student of the Year
- Catherine Hershey Award Houseparent/Houseparents of the Year
- Catherine Hershey Award Administrator of the Year
- Catherine Hershey Award Educator of the Year
- Catherine Hershey Award Alumnus of the Year
- CORE Member Trustee of the Year
- CORE Member Policymaker of the Year

[Note: The nomination forms will be added to the CORE website. All nominations must be received by August 31, 2021.]