



### Year Ends Without Progress On Legislation We've Been Monitoring

Of course, we are only half way through the 117th Congressional Session. Bills previously filed with continue to be in consideration through 2022.

S.2689

**Medicaid Continuity for Children in Foster Care Act (S. 2689)** was filed by Sen. Richard Burr (North Carolina) on August 10, 2021.

The bill would clarify existing law to ensure that the care provide for certain foster children in need of higher levels of care are covered by Medicaid. The bill has 4 co-sponsors: Sen. Dianne Feinstein [D-CA] original co-sponsor, Sen. Todd Young [R-IN] signed on September 20, 2021, Sen Alejandro "Alex" Padilla [D-CA] signed on September 20, 2021, and Sen. Marco Rubio [R-FL] signed on September 2021. The bill was assigned to the Finance Committee.

The only category of care impacted by this legislation is Qualified Residential Treatment Programs serving more than 16 residents. Programs with a capacity of more than 16 residents are subject to the IMD (Institute for Mental Disease) exclusion that prohibits payments to a hospital, nursing facility or other institution with more than 16 beds that primarily provides care for people with mental conditions.

H.R. 4378

**Protecting Siblings Relationships In Foster Care Act (H.R. 4378)** was filed by Rep. Don Bacon on July 9, 2021.

The bill is a 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.

The bill has 3 original co-sponsors and an additional co-sponsor added on July 13, 2021. Co-sponsors include: Rep. Karen Bass [D-CA], Rep. James R. Langevin [D- RI], Rep. Brenda Lawrence [D-MI], and Rep. Markwayne Millin [R-OK].

H.R. 4299

**Foster Care Stabilization Act** (H.R. 4299) was filed by Rep Don Bacon on July 1, 2021.

The bill directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a demonstration grant program to provide emergency relief to foster youth and improve pre- placement services offered by foster care stabilization agencies, and for other purposes.

The bill has 3 original co-sponsors: Rep. Karen Bass [D-CA], Rep. James R. Langevin [D-RI], and Rep. Markwayne Mullin [R-OK]

H.R. 4348

The **Tribal Family Fairness Act** (H.R. 4348) was filed by Rep. Karen Bass on July 2, 2021. The purpose is to remove administrative barriers to participation of Indian tribes in Federal Child Welfare programs, and increase funding for tribal child welfare programs, and for other purposes.

Co-sponsors include: Rep. Sharice Davids [D-KS 07/02/21], Rep. G.K. Butterfield [D-NC 07-19-21], Rep. Liz Cheney [R-WY 07-19-21], Rep. Pete Aguilar [D-CA 07/12/21], Rep. Ken Calvert [R-CA 07/19/21], Rep. Angie Craig [D-MN 07/19//21], Rep. Charlie Crist [D-FL].

The **Accountability for Congregate Care Act** has not yet been filed. In October 2021 Rep. Ro Khanna [D-CA] announced at a press conference with Paris Hilton his intent to craft legislation entitled the Accountability for Congregate Care Act. Rep. Adam Schiff also spoke in favor of the legislation. Reportedly, Sen. Jeff Merkley [D-OR] has indicated he will sponsor the legislation in the Senate.

Reportedly, the intended legislation would identify a bill of rights for residents including protections against solitary confinement, chemical and physical restrains, alienation for their peers, and the right to call friends and family. Reportedly, the legislation will include minimum standards of care and treatment that facilities will have to meet. To my knowledge, nothing yet has been officially filed in either the House or Senate.

FFPSA

**The waivers for 27 States being exempt from the impact of the Family First Protective Services Act expired on September 30, 2021.**

As September 30th approached, the foster care capacity crisis was already in full-swing. For detailed information, please see an article entitled “**The Unseen Crisis**”. It references news articles and publications highlighting the negative impact on recruiting and maintaining foster homes during the pandemic, the shortage of residential resources for children not needing treatment services, information regarding children staying in hotels and child welfare worker’s office while they await foster homes, and the failure of child welfare workers to investigate complaints of child abuse/neglect in order to keep children safe.



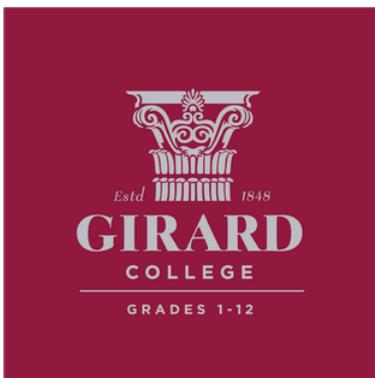
**2022 Membership Dues for the Coalition of Residential Excellence are due by the end of January 2022.**

Invoices for 2022 CORE membership dues were electronically distributed to our member agencies toward the end of December 2021. If you did not receive notification, please let me know.

In addition, if there are extenuating circumstances that preclude payment in January, please let me know.

Obviously, 2022 brings both opportunities and challenges to our member organizations. We continue to agree with the man of wisdom who wrote: “Two are better than one; they have a good return for their labor.”

**Welcome Back**



Girard College has a long history of serving as a residential school for children. The school began in 1848.

Today, Girard College is a 5-day residential school for academically capable students, grades 1 through 12, from families headed by a single parent or guardian. Girard College provides a full scholarship to all their

students.

Girard College was one of the original members of the Coalition for Residential Education in 1994. Dominic Cermele, previous President of Girard College, served on the CORE Board of Directors for many years. He was serving on the board when I began as a new board member. Subsequent to Dominic's retirement from Girard College, James Turner who at that time was employed by Girard College took his place on the CORE board.

Subsequently, because of downsizing and the economy, the agency did not renew their membership several years ago. It was after James Turner left their employment. Fortunately, J.T. is back and values the benefits of CORE. He is currently serving as the Interim President and has been back at the school since 2018.

Girard College's residential program continues the school's original mission of educating the whole child. The purpose for admission is exclusively educational. The program is not a typical boarding school since all children return home to be with their families every weekend.

Residential Advisors live in the dormitories with their students and are often the main contact with families. The school has a full complement of support services including academics, residential, counseling, athletics, arts, and a host of extracurricular activities. This year, Girard College added a new member to the Achievement Team, the Family Engagement Coordinator. It is an effort to enhance the overall educational experience of the child and their family.

In addition to a variety of sports activities, the school also has an Extended Day Program to provide additional learning opportuni-

ties. Students can discover new interests and pursue their passions with programs such as: culinary skills, gardening, swimming, SCUBA, lifeguarding, theater, choir, band, visual arts, 3D printing and more. Students are also permitted to participate in activities in the community and to hold part-time jobs.

All services are provided in a culturally competent and trauma informed manner. Girard is in their third year of using the Kickboard behavior management system to support academic and residential staff with behaviors that they want to highlight and behaviors that they want to extinguish as well as to monitor students' improvements in real time. This consistency across the campus is critical for students who may have experienced trauma and thrive on predictability. This platform also collects data to help the agency see areas of growth and pockets of need.

The school uses Suite 360 which is a social skills curriculum and behavior management support system. It supports Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and has components in restorative justice as well as mental health that is used across the campus.

Girard College is accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commissions of Elementary and Secondary Schools. The Accreditation Period is October 15, 2021 to January 1, 2029.