

Rep. Steube Leads Bipartisan Effort to Expand Housing for Foster Children

[August 15, 2025] WASHINGTON — U.S. Representative Greg Steube (R-Fla.) introduced today the Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act. This bill permits federal funds to be used on cottage family homes for the purpose of addressing shortfalls in housing for foster children.



“Every son and daughter of America deserves a roof over their head with patient and supportive parents to guide them,” said Rep. Steube. “I am honored to introduce the Create Accountable Respectful Environments for Children Act to expand options for foster youth and improve overall access to care in child welfare.”

This legislation amends Part E of Title IV in the Social Security Act to grant eligibility for federal funds to cottage family homes.

Rep. Steube is co-leading this legislation alongside Representatives Dr. Neal Dunn (R-Fla.), Kat Cammack (R-Fla.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), and Darren Soto (D-Fla.)

The CARE for Children Act aims to create safe, healthy environments for children by promoting capacity-building, keeping sibling groups together and providing a normalized home and community environment for our youth in Florida,” said **Rep. Cammack**. “At a time when foster homes are in short supply, this bill ensures that cottage family homes keep children safe, nurtured, and cared for to help them grow into happy, healthy adults. I’m glad to join Rep. Dunn and my Florida colleagues in supporting the CARE Act.”

“It is essential we protect children and give them every opportunity to thrive. The Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act addresses the health, safety, and well-being of youngsters who face difficult challenges,” said **Rep. Wasserman Schultz**. “I’m proud to introduce this legislation with my colleagues so we can provide children with a normalized home and community environment when times are most difficult.”

“Every child deserves a safe, stable, and loving home. I’m proud to cosponsor the CARE for Children Act to help address the shortage of foster homes, keep siblings together, and strengthen protections to ensure every child’s safety and well-being,” said **Rep. Soto**. “Together, we can

build a foster care system that puts children first and gives them the supportive environment they need to thrive.”

The CARE for Children Act has the support of The Baptist Children’s Village, Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, and the Coalition of Residential Excellence.

“We believe the CARE Act not only expands the number of residential placement resources for children, but at the same time ensures safeguards and accountability to keep children safe. An additional strength of cottage family care is ability to keep sibling groups together. We are grateful that Rep. Steube is sensitive to the unmet needs of children in harm’s way and for the safeguards he has included in this legislation to ensure safety and well-being of children.” — Don Forrester, Executive Director, Coalition of Residential Excellence

“We are grateful for Congressman Steube, Congressman Dr. Dunn, Congresswoman Cammack, Congresswoman Wasserman-Schultz and Congressman Soto for seeing the need for safe, stable homes for the children from difficult places. We appreciate their commitment to quality homes that will provide strong foundations and a hope for the future.” — Maria Knapp, President, Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Inc.

“Congress understands that the living conditions of some children require that they be removed and Congress refuses to ignore their plight. The CARE Act reflects Congress’ commitment to these children by engaging with and providing assistance to the state agencies that are working to provide home environments that are best suited and equipped to serve their unique needs.” — Sean Milner, Executive Director, The Baptist Children’s Village.

Read the full bill text [here](#).

[<https://steube.house.gov/press-releases/rep-steube-leads-bipartisan-effort-to-expand-housing-for-foster-children/>]

NOW THAT THE BILL IS FILED, CORE members need to give priority to contacting their representatives on Capitol Hill to request support for this legislation. It is critically important that we represent a **United Voice** with an impassioned plea that passage of this legislation is important to children in harm’s way. Without the additional placement resources available through cottage family homes, a child welfare system that has repeatedly fallen short of having suitable available homes for children will continue to fail children and families from hard places.

As a nation that pays rhetoric to the importance of keeping children safe, the time is now to ensure that children are provided accountable, respectful environments to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

COALITION OF RESIDENTIAL EXCELLENCE

CORE

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



OCTOBER 21-23, 2025

WACO, TEXAS

Registration Deadline: September 15, 2025

CORE Conference 2025 and Willson-Johnson Lecture Series

October 21–23, 2025 | Location: Waco, Texas

Hosted by Methodist Children’s Home

Rooted and Rising: Building Healing Communities

DAY 1: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025 – WACO HILTON

12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Pre-Conference Optional Activity (*Pre-Registration Required) Dr. Pepper Museum

2 p.m. - 2:05 p.m. | Welcome

TREY OAKLEY, President and CEO – Methodist Children’s Home

2:05 – 2:10 p.m. | Speaker Introduction

JEAN WRIGHT, Senior Director for Organizational Effectiveness – Methodist Children’s Home

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Willson-Johnson Lecture Series

DR. ROBERT ANDA, Co-Founder of ACE Interface

“Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities”

3:30 p.m. -3:35 p.m. | Closing

TRACI WAGNER, Vice President for Programs – Methodist Children’s Home

3:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | Waco Campus Tour

[*Transportation Provided to/from Waco Hilton](#)

5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. | An Evening Reception
Refreshments, Fellowship and Discussion

6:15 p.m. – 7 p.m. | Speaker Introduction

BROOKE DAVILLA, Vice President for Organizational Effectiveness – Methodist Children’s Home

- **DR. ROBERT ANDA**, Co-Founder of ACE Interface
- **DR. JON SINGLETARY**, Dean of Diana R. Garland School of Social Work at Baylor University
- **SHEN CHEFALO**, Founder and Lead Strategist of Chefalo Consulting

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025 – WACO CONVENTION CENTER

[*Shuttle Pick Up at Hotel](#) 7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. | Conference Registration and Breakfast

8:15 a.m. – 8:20 a.m. | Welcome

TREY OAKLEY, President and CEO – Methodist Children’s Home

8:20 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. | Opening Remarks

DON FORRESTER, Executive Director - CORE

8:25 a.m. -8:30 a.m. | Speaker Introduction

BROOKE DAVILLA, Vice President for Organizational Effectiveness – Methodist Children’s Home

8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Keynote Session

SHEN CHEFALO, Founder and Lead Strategist - Chefalo Consulting

9:45 a.m. -9:50 a.m. | Closing Remarks

JEAN WRIGHT, Senior Director for Organizational Effectiveness – Methodist Children’s Home

[9:50 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Break/Book Signing](#)

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. | 60-Minute Breakout Workshops (*Pre-Registration Required)

Workshop A: **LAURA HARDIN**, **Senior Risk Consultant** – Praesidium Inc.
Creating a Culture of Safety to Prevent Sexual Abuse

Workshop B: **KELLY LAWSON**, **Senior Director for Advancement** – Methodist C Home
Mission Meets Strategy: Fundraising That Sustains and Grows

Workshop C: **CRAIG WRIGHTS**, **Director of Training and Organizational Development** –
Milton Hershey School
From Foundation to Future: Staying Aligned in Times of Change

11:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. | 60-Minute Breakout Workshops (*Pre-Registration Required)

Workshop A: **REBECCA WARREN**, **Deputy General Counsel** - Milton Hershey School
DEREK THOMAS, **Director of Risk Management** -Milton Hershey School
Risky Business? Don't Ignore the Emerging Risks in Residential School Life!

Workshop B: **DON FORRESTER**, **Executive Director - CORE**
Facing the Challenges and Moving Forward

Workshop C: **MARISSA SMITH**, **Assistant Vice President for Programs** - Methodist
Children's Home **ALICE FRY**, **Clinical Therapist** | Methodist Children's Home
Providing Clinical Therapy to Children and Youth Experiencing Out of Home Placement

12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. | Lunch and Vendor Showcase

2 p.m. – 3 p.m. | 60-Minute Breakout Workshops (*Pre-Registration Required)

Workshop A: **ELISHA HOGGARD**, **Vice President for Programs** - Florida Sheriff's Y.R.
Trauma Informed Supervision

Workshop B: **TYLER PAU**, **Vice Principal of Residential Life** - Kamehameha
Schools

LANAKILA NILES, **Dean of Student Well Being for Residential Life** -
Kamehameha Schools *From Consequences to Character: The Role of Remediation in
Student Growth*

Workshop C: **JOSHUA SPROCK**, **Staff Development Coordinator** - Cal Farley's
Boys Ranch *Bridging Generations: From Misunderstandings to Meaningful
Connection*

3 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Break

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | Closing Remarks and Door Prizes

LYLE MASON, **Vice President for Advancement** – *Methodist Children's Home*

**Shuttle Drop Off to Hotel*

3:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Optional Activities (*Pre-Registration Required)

Magnolia Silos Tour
Waco History Walking Tour
Self-Guided Shopping Tour

**Transportation Provided to/from Activities and Back to Hotel*

DAY 3: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025 - WACO CONVENTION CENTER

**Shuttle Pick Up at Hotel*

7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. | Breakfast and Networking

8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. | Opening Remarks
JAMES TURNER, President – *CORE Board of Directors*

8:30 a.m. – 8:35 a.m. | Panel Introduction
TREY OAKLEY, President and CEO – Methodist Children's Home

8:35 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. | Residential Life and Educational Panel

“Rooted in Care: Integrating Safety, Connection, and Accountability in Residential Life”

- **KRISTI HAYES**, (Moderator) **Regional Director** – Unbound Now
- **TRACI WAGNER**, (Panelist) **Vice President for Programs** – Methodist Children's Home
- **TROY MCPEAK**, (Panelist) **Training and Consultation Specialist** – Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development
- **LAURA HARDIN**, (Panelist) **Senior Risk Consultant** – Praesidium Inc.

9:30 a.m.- 9:45 a.m. | Break

9:45 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. | Speaker Introduction
DON FORRESTER, Executive Director - CORE

9:50:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m. | Legislative Update
GREGG HARPER, Lobbyist

10:20 a.m. – 10:55 a.m. | Strategic Plan
JIMMY HARMON, President- Black Mountain Home for Children

10:55 a.m. – 11:55 a.m. | The Catherine Hershey Awards **JAMES TURNER**,
President of the CORE Board of Directors– Milton Hershey School

11:55 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Conference Closing Remarks
KEVIN BROWN, Director of Training– Methodist Children's Home

**Lunch to-go options available *Shuttle Drop Off to Hotel*

