



June 8, 2018

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty,

We remember and treasure our time with you, and have looked forward to meeting with you again. The OHIO Youth Advisory Board serves as the statewide voice of foster care youth, ages 14 and older. ACTION Ohio is an alumni group of adults who have experienced foster care personally, and who dedicate our time to improve outcomes for the next generation. Our two groups have been working together since 2006 to make a difference, side-by-side.

First and foremost, we want to thank you for being our champion. Back in 2015, you and Congressman Steve Stivers responded to our *Three Days on the Hill* visit by bringing together the entire Ohio Congressional Delegation to request that HUD create a demonstration project that addresses the high rate of homelessness of former foster youth by adopting the *Foster Alumni Supportive Housing Program (FASH)*.

HUD responded to your letter in 2015 by stating that they did not have sufficient funding in their FY 2016 budget to implement HUD-FASH as a demonstration program. They suggested the *Family Unification Program (FUP)* as an alternative. Your office responded by seeking to increase funds for FUP. We are now and always deeply grateful for your support.

FUP is a wonderful program, but it is not available statewide or nationwide. FUP funding is allocated through a competitive process; therefore, not all PHAs administer the program. Imagine how wonderful it would be if FUP vouchers could be made available on demand for every young person who “ages out” of foster care in the country.

Sadly, given the choice, few public housing authorities choose to prioritize the needs of youth aging out of foster care. HUD’s letter in 2015 also mentioned that each PHA has the flexibility to prioritize youth aging out of foster care as a population. During our March trip to D.C., Barbara Sard of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities suggested to our youth delegates that they could visit every PHA in the nation, one at a time, and ask each PHA to please prioritize foster youth aging out of care. In the words of our young people in attendance, “That would take years.”



Our young people remain determined to end the Foster Care to Homeless Pipeline. Just as it was the young people themselves who authored the HUD-FASH proposal, it was Ohio foster care youth who helped design the *Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act*, as proposed by Representative Michael Turner.

There has been recent discussion regarding the work requirement included in the bill. It's important to note that HUD-FASH included a work requirement. The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program has a work requirement. Rapid Re-Housing vouchers have a work requirement. Title IV-E funding, which states have the option to utilize to extend foster care services to age 21, has a work requirement.

There have also been questions about timelines. Rapid Re-Housing vouchers are only funded on a competitive basis, and have a time limit of 4-18 months. FUP vouchers for foster youth can only be given "for a period not to exceed 36 months." FSS vouchers have a time limit of 3-5 years. But, if the Turner bill passes, housing supports for foster youth could be provided from time of lease until that young person's 26th birthday.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, or Dan Hare from Representative Turner's office, with any questions. And please know that we treasure and remember your support.

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