



November 13, 2019

The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sen. Reed,

On behalf of ACTION Ohio, the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare, and the nearly [55,000 current and former foster youth](#) supporting HUD's new Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI), we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to you for preserving the eligibility within HUD's Tenant Protection Account that makes FYI possible and for your support of the legislation from which FYI emerged, the "Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act" (FSHO) (H.R. 4300/S. 2803).

Please also express our appreciation to your staff member, Christina Monroe, who negotiated the inclusion of the Portman Amendment (S.Amdt.1235) within the final FY2020 Senate appropriations bill (S.Amdt.948 to H.R.3055) which maintains FUP within the Tenant Protection Account, thus making FYI possible.

Since the enactment of the Cranston-Gonzalez Affordable Housing Act of 1990, the Family Unification Program (FUP) has been listed as one of the four original purposes of HUD's Tenant Protection Account (vouchers referred to as TPVs). It was just this time last year that a group of current and former foster youth discovered that this account is flexible enough to eliminate homelessness for youth leaving foster care.

Their painstaking research revealed that because FUP is an eligible use of TPVs, the HUD Secretary has the discretion to issue Housing Choice Vouchers "on demand" to youth leaving foster care who are at risk of homelessness. The youth drafted a proposal (attached) to explain how FUP vouchers issued from the Tenant Protection Account could be perfectly synchronized with emancipation, thus eliminating the gaps in public systems through which all too many young people fall into homelessness and sex trafficking upon their release from foster care.

On March 4, 2019, youth delivered their proposal directly to Sec. Carson and his leadership team. Shortly thereafter, the HUD Office of General Counsel agreed that the youth were right. HUD named their proposal the Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI) and invited PHAs and their public child welfare agency partners to begin applying for vouchers on July 26, 2019. Therefore, as you can imagine, we were shocked to find that the FY2020 Senate appropriations bill inadvertently eliminated FUP as an eligible use of TPVs just months after the youth themselves discovered foster youth were eligible for it. While this certainly would have been corrected when the House and Senate bills are conferenced, we are relieved and grateful that Christina worked with her colleagues



to fix this error which would have immediately undone all of the good that these alumni have accomplished for their younger “brothers and sisters” in care.

It is no surprise that you would support FYI and FSHO given that they fit squarely within your impressive efforts to end homelessness. But perhaps more poignantly, these innovations to further smooth out the path for emancipating youth are a natural development in the evolution of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. Thus, with these latest efforts, you take up the mantle of your predecessor from Rhode Island on the 20th anniversary of Sen. Chafee’s legacy for foster youth.

We will never be able to adequately thank you for all you that you and your staff do to reduce homelessness and improved the lives of marginalized people nationwide.

If there is anything we can do to help move FSHO forward or to further discuss FYI, please don’t hesitate to contact Ruth White at 202-270-7336 or rwhite@nchcw.org.

With admiration and appreciation,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Ruth White", with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.

Ruth White, MSSA
Executive Director, NCHCW

A black ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Jamole Callahan", with a long, horizontal tail extending to the right.

Jamole Callahan, BA
Director of Training & Development, ACTION Ohio

Enc.: FYI TPV Proposal