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# Brown's Bipartisan Stable Housing for Foster Youth Bill Included In Omnibus Bill

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## Senator Led Bipartisan Legislation that Would Help Prevent Youth Homelessness

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) – ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs announced that his bipartisan legislation, the *Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019*, was included in the omnibus. The legislation which Brown [introduced with Senator Charles Grassley \(R-IA\), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee](#) would provide Family Unification Vouchers (FUP) “on-demand” to foster youth who are at risk of homelessness as they transition to adulthood without the familial supports that many young people can rely on. Brown worked in partnership with ACTION Ohio to ensure the voices and needs of young people and individuals with lived experiences were reflected in the legislation.

**“Young people coming out of foster care face many challenges, especially now at the height of a public health and economic crisis,”** said Brown. **“The last thing these young adults need to worry about is figuring out where to sleep at night– let alone study, prepare for work, and build a future. This legislation will help ensure former foster youth transitioning out of the system have the affordable housing options they need to successfully start adulthood and prevent homelessness.”**

Specifically, the *Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019* would:

- Streamline access to FUP vouchers for Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in more communities, making it easier to serve foster youth anywhere they live,
- Extend a foster youth’s FUP voucher for up to an additional 24 months as they are working toward self-sufficiency, including participating in a Family Self Sufficiency program,

- Require coordination between PHAs and Public Child Welfare Agencies to identify eligible recipients and help housing agencies to connect youth to supportive services, and
- Require PHAs to submit information to the Secretary to monitor program outcomes

Representative Madeleine Dean (PA-04) introduced and passed the House version of the bill last year.

Each year, approximately 20,000 youth across the country age out of foster care. This results in a sudden and permanent transition from foster care to adulthood. Unfortunately, this sudden transition places these vulnerable young adults at risk of homelessness and housing instability due to the loss of the financial, educational, and social supports that the child welfare system provides. Surveys indicate that as many as 1 out of 3 youth aging out of foster care experience homelessness after aging out and that as many as half of all youth experiencing homelessness have come out of the foster care system.

The legislation is supported by housing and child welfare organizations, including ACTION Ohio, Ohio Youth Advisory Board, National Center for Housing & Child Welfare, National Alliance to End Homeless, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Children's Defense Fund, First Focus Campaign for Children, Ohio Children's Alliance, Schoolhouse Connection, Youth Homes of Mid-America, National Crittenton, Foster Club, Bethany Christian Services, Children's Home Society of America, Coalition for Family and Children Services in Iowa, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials and Public Housing Authorities Directors Association.

**“With the inclusion of the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act within the Omnibus package, Sen. Brown has insulated America’s current and former foster youth from homelessness,”** said Ruth White, executive director of the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare. **“It speaks volumes about how much Sen. Brown and his staff care about vulnerable youth that amid all of the chaos facing our country, they found a way to keep their best interests top of mind.”**