



Stop DHR from Charging Abused and Neglected Children for their Own Care

Currently DHR applies for Social Security Disability (SSDI) and Social Security Survivor (OASDI) benefits for children in their care who have been abused and/or neglected and live in a foster home, group home, or treatment center. Rather than using that child's benefits for additional services for that child, they are using the money to reimburse the state for the cost of their placement.

This bill will ensure that the children are notified when application for benefits are submitted, that there is an accounting done of how the benefits are being spent, and for older youth, at least a portion of the benefits are used to help with the difficult transition out of foster care. National data from the most expansive survey of former foster youth (720 of whom were contacted at age 26) indicates how poor their outcomes are:¹

- 31% (182) of youth surveyed reported being homeless or needing to couch-surf after aging out of the child welfare system and almost half reported experiencing homelessness more than once
- 50% reported experiencing homelessness more than once
- 19.9% (118) had no high school diploma or GED at age 26
- Only 2.5% (15) had a 4 year degree; 4.4% (26) had a 2 year degree
- 46.8 % (279) were unemployed (About half worked in the past year and half had last worked more than a year ago.)
- 15.3% (91) have a chronic medical condition
- **76.5% (254) of women and 47.6% (119) of men were receiving means tested benefits**

Compared to a 1 in 194 chance for someone in the general U.S. population, youth that have aged out of care have a 1 in 11 chance of experiencing homelessness over the course of a year.²

This bill requires DHR to put at least the following percentages of the benefits into savings accounts:

14-15 year olds:	40%
16-17 year olds:	80%
18-20 year olds:	100%

To co-sponsor the bill or for more information, call Senator Madaleno at (301) 858-3137, Delegate Moon at (301) 858-3474, or Melissa Rock, Child Welfare Director, Advocates for Children and Youth at (202) 460-1219.

¹ "Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26". Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, p. 12, 20, 28, 46, & 44.

² "The state of homelessness in America 2012," Washington, DC: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Homelessness Research Institute (2012), p. 5.

