



SUPPORT THE FOSTERING CONNECTIONS ACT SENATE BILL 168 (Senator Michael Padilla)

Ensure Young People have Age-Appropriate Supports

THE ISSUE

Young people in supervised state systems often find themselves without the support of a stable family and are often denied the chance to participate in everyday teenage activities. At age 18, they leave these systems without the life experiences and family supports to become successful adults. National data from Annie E. Casey Foundation and others report that:

- More than 20% experience homelessness at age 18
- 42% will not graduate high school by age 19 (compared to 13% in the general population)
- 54% are unemployed by age 26
- 64% of males and 33% of females will be involved in the justice system

THE OPPORTUNITY

Young people who are exiting state care need age-appropriate supports and opportunities to succeed in the transition to adulthood. The current array of services aren't properly supporting young people transitioning to adulthood, and New Mexico needs to (or "can") better leverage federal Title IV-E dollars to provide these transition services to all young people impacted by systems.

SEE REVERSE FOR FAQ'S

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is this legislation for?

Young people ages 18 to 20 who are exiting state care.

What is the Fostering Connections Act?

The Fostering Connections Act passed in 2019 and allows young people to opt in to age-appropriate supports up to age 21. Those who opt in will remain under the legal jurisdiction of the children's court, allowing them continued and uninterrupted access to age-appropriate supports like case-management, living stipends that can be used to continue living in a licensed foster home or independently, and court review to ensure stakeholder compliance and youth well-being. Extended care provides these young people more time to finish school, develop skills to be successful adults, and build supportive networks and social capital.

What will the 2020 bill do?

The proposed legislation is clean-up to the Fostering Connections Act that passed in 2019. To ensure we are able to maximize available federal funds, revised language is based on lessons from implementation of extended care programs in other states. It allows young people who were adopted or in guardianships that disrupt after age 18 to participate in the program, provides the option for young people to enter and exit the program as they need, and requires the development of a data collection proposal to drive implementation and improvement of the program.

What will it cost?

Legislation does not have an appropriation because the costs are accounted for in CYFD's budget request. After the program is fully phased in during 2023, the expenditure will allow the state to take advantage of \$1.06 million available in federal Title IV-E funds. By leveraging Title IV-E funds, the state will free up Chafee funds in the current budget to further invest in extending aftercare support services to age 23.

Additional Questions

Contact: Ezra Spitzer
Executive Director
505-463-0660
Ezra.Spitzer@nmcan.org

Arika E. Sánchez
Director of Policy and Advocacy
808-225-1494
Arika.Sanchez@nmcan.org

