

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES.

Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. KERRY, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BAYH, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. AKAKA, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas approximately 500,000 children in the United States live in foster care each year;

Whereas children enter the foster care system for a variety of reasons, including inadequate care, abuse, or neglect by a parent or guardian;

Whereas the major factors that contribute to the placement of a child in the foster care system include substance abuse, mental illness, poverty, and a lack of education of a parent or guardian of the child;

Whereas a child entering the foster care system must confront the widespread misperception that children in foster care are disruptive, unruly, and dangerous, even though placement in the foster care system is based on the actions of a parent or guardian, not the child;

Whereas States and communities should be provided with the resources to invest in preventative and reunification services and post-permanency programs to ensure that more children in the foster care system are provided safe, loving, permanent placements;

Whereas the foster care system is intended to be a temporary solution, yet children remain in the foster care system for an average of 3 years;

Whereas children of color are disproportionately represented in the foster care system and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas the average child in the foster care system—

(1) is 10 years old; and

(2) will be placed in 3 different homes, leading to disruptive transfers to new schools, separation from siblings, and unfamiliar surroundings;

Whereas most children “age out” of the foster care system at the age of 18;

Whereas the number of children who enter the foster care system each year has declined over the decade preceding the date of the agreement to this resolution, but the number of children who “age out” of the foster care system without placement with a permanent family has increased substantially, rising from 20,000 children in 2002 to 29,000 children in 2008;

Whereas children who “age out” of the foster care system lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas, of the children who have “aged out” of the foster care system—

(1) 25 percent have been homeless;

(2) 51 percent have been unemployed for significant stretch of time, and

(3) only 2 percent have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher;

Whereas, by age 19, approximately 50 percent of young women who have been in the foster care system have been pregnant, compared to only 20 percent of young women who have been not in the foster care system;

Whereas research reveals that children born to teen parents are exposed to serious and high risks;

Whereas National Foster Care Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about the special needs of children in the foster care system and to recognize the important role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351; 122 Stat. 3949) provides for new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children and families in the foster care system; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes National Foster Care Month as
3 an opportunity to raise awareness about the chal-
4 lenges of children in the foster care system;

5 (2) encourages Congress to implement policy to
6 improve the lives of children in the foster care sys-
7 tem;

8 (3) supports the designation of a “National
9 Foster Care Month”;

10 (4) acknowledges the needs of the children in
11 the foster care system;

12 (5) honors the commitment and dedication of
13 those individuals who work tirelessly to provide as-
14 sistance and services to children in the foster care
15 system; and

16 (6) recognizes the need to continue working to
17 improve the outcomes of all children in the foster
18 care system through title IV of the Social Security

1 Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs de-
2 signed to help children in the foster care system—
3 (A) reunite with their biological parents; or
4 (B) if the children cannot be reunited with
5 their biological parents, find permanent, safe,
6 and loving homes.