

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 263

Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity for Congress to improve the foster care system throughout the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 23, 2007

Mr. CARDOZA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity for Congress to improve the foster care system throughout the United States.

Whereas National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity to recognize the important role that the foster care system plays in the lives of the more than 500,000 children currently in foster care programs throughout the United States;

Whereas National Foster Care Month also provides an opportunity to explore the difficulties faced by children in the foster care system and to reaffirm the Nation's commitment to improving the lives of these children by improving foster care programs;

Whereas many children in the foster care system have spent multiple years in foster care programs and have experienced an unstable home life due to frequent moves from one foster home to another;

Whereas approximately 50 percent of foster care children have been placed in foster care programs for longer than 1 year;

Whereas 25 percent of foster care children have been placed in foster care programs for at least 3 years;

Whereas children in foster care programs for longer periods of time often experience worse outcomes than children in foster care programs for shorter periods of time;

Whereas children in foster care programs are more likely than the general population to become teen parents, to rely on public assistance as adults, to become homeless, and to experience mental health disorders at a higher rate;

Whereas repeated studies have shown that a child's very early years are critical for brain development, meaning that it is extremely important to find suitable permanent homes for children during this critical period;

Whereas less than half of the children in foster care programs who are available for adoption each year are adopted;

Whereas there are 119,000 children eligible for adoption every year who do not get adopted;

Whereas a stable home is critical to a child's development;
and

Whereas every child deserves to be raised by a loving family:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That in recognition of National Foster Care
2 Month and in order to improve the foster care system
3 throughout the United States, it is the sense of the House
4 of Representatives that Congress should take the following
5 actions:

6 (1) Provide Federal adoption assistance to chil-
7 dren adopted from the foster care system, including
8 guardianship assistance.

9 (2) Provide sufficient funds to States and units
10 of local government to ensure that all levels of gov-
11 ernment are protecting foster children, including by
12 hiring enough skilled caseworkers to track the
13 progress of every child in the foster care system.

14 (3) Provide sufficient funds for State and local
15 court systems to improve oversight of foster care
16 programs and to protect children in their jurisdic-
17 tion by—

18 (A) creating more meaningful opportuni-
19 ties for children and parents to participate in
20 court proceedings, including the provision of a
21 Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for
22 every child in the foster care system;

23 (B) training court personnel alone and in
24 conjunction with child welfare agency staff and

1 others involved in protecting and caring for
2 children; and

3 (C) collaborating with child welfare agen-
4 cies to collect and share all relevant data and
5 information that will assist appropriate govern-
6 ment officials in making better decisions lead-
7 ing to more positive outcomes for children in
8 foster care programs.

9 (4) Increase the quantity of qualified attorneys
10 who practice before courts with jurisdiction over
11 children in foster care by—

12 (A) requiring that States adopt standards
13 of practice, preparation, education, and com-
14 pensation for these attorneys;

15 (B) supporting student loan forgiveness
16 programs and other efforts to encourage quali-
17 fied attorneys to practice in this area; and

18 (C) encouraging law schools, bar associa-
19 tions, and law firms to build a pool of qualified
20 attorneys to practice in this area.

21 (5) Ensure that improving the foster care sys-
22 tem remains a top priority for both Congress and
23 the Nation.

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