



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1335		DATE: 4/6/2021	
COMMITTEE: Emerging Issues			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 11:39 PM

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I am in Support of this Bill. I Support Foster-Choice and Reuniting the Foster Children do to COVID-19.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CLAIRE TERREBONNE		PHONE NUMBER: 816-984-8210	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: JACKSON COUNTY CASA		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES	
ADDRESS: 2544 HOLMES			
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64108
EMAIL: cterrebbonne@jacksoncountycasa-mo.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 4:46 PM

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To: Missouri House Emerging Issues Committee Re: Written Testimony in Support, Missouri HB 1335
Date: April 6, 2021 Jackson County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) supports House Bill 1335, which temporarily extends and expands foster care for young adults beyond 21 and allows re-entry into foster for those who have “aged-out” during this COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency. Jackson County CASA is a legal and social service advocacy organization that represents children, birth to 21, in foster care under the jurisdiction of the 16th Circuit Court of Jackson County, Family Court Division. Recognizing the unique vulnerability of our older youth, especially those youth who “age out” not having achieved permanency in a family-based setting, we also offer extended support services for our former youth up to age 26. The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted young people who are in or have experienced foster care. These youth have faced disruptions in their access to basic income, continuing their education, safe and stable housing, and health care services. In response to this crisis, Congress passed and President Trump signed on December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-94, which contains H.R. 7947, the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act. This law provides an incredible opportunity to meet the urgent needs of young people, as well as providing child welfare agencies the increased capacity and funding to do so. It provides a moratorium on aging out, a requirement for re-entry and \$400 million in Chafee funds, including \$50 million for Education and Training Vouchers or Grants (ETV). Missouri is likely to receive \$10 million in additional Chafee funds. This federal law has been in effect for over three months and Missouri has yet to implement its provisions. Accordingly, Missouri House Bill 1335 is a much needed step toward fulfilling the intent of the law and meeting the immediate and urgent needs of current and former foster youth during this pandemic—youth who are/were entrusted to the State’s care and who cannot reasonably rely on the support of family. Like so many, our current and former older foster youth have struggled tremendously during this pandemic. Unlike many, however, the State has or had been the only or at least primary source of stability and support for many years. These young people, therefore, need Missouri to respond quickly to fulfill its obligations and meet their needs. Several surveys have been conducted nation-wide illuminating their struggles. One study found that half of the participants reported COVID-19 negatively impacted their living situation; three-quarters reported that their financial situation would be stable for no more than one month; fifty-five percent reported food insecurity; another almost half reported a negative impact on their employment; two-thirds reported a negative impact on their educational progress or attainment; and over half reported symptoms of depression and anxiety.
<https://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Foster-Youth-COVID-19->

FINAL_Corrected.pdf. Similar findings certainly hold true in Missouri. More specifically, all three of our CASA youth who “aged-out” after April 1, 2020, have experienced significant hardships during the pandemic. One of those individuals, a young mother, said “it could not have been a worse time to age out of care.” All three lost their jobs during the initial round of shutdowns and business closures. One lost opportunities to further her education and training as a medical assistant due to the lack of externships and job placement opportunities. Two of the three struggled with childcare issues, which consequently impacted job opportunities. All three faced food insecurity and had to borrow money or otherwise rely on friends to pay their rent and other expenses. This opportunity to assist these young people could be life-changing. They need this relief now. Neighboring states like Illinois, Kentucky, and Nebraska have implemented the aging-out moratorium, re-entry, and Chafee provisions, and have or will soon begin distributing financial assistance. States as diverse as Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Arizona have also implemented provisions or are quickly moving forward. These are examples that Missouri can easily follow without having to reinvent the wheel or wait for more guidance. Moreover, while the law was intended to encourage and allow states to be as responsive as possible during the pandemic and reach the largest number of young people, it does allow the state to use allotted Chafee funds without a state match in many circumstances, including direct payments to youth. I urge this committee, and the Missouri Legislature more broadly, to take action now by compelling the Children’s Division to act through the passage of this House Bill 1335. Thank you for your consideration, and we would be happy to be a resource for your deliberations. Respectfully, Claire M. Terrebonne
Director of Legal Services
Jackson County CASAResources:1. https://www.fosterclub.com/sites/default/files/page-cb_attachments/Copy%20of%20FAQ%20on%20HR%207947_March%2024.pdf2.
<https://dcs.az.gov/chafee-funding/application>3. <https://www.kyvoc.com>4.
<https://www.naccchildlaw.org/news/555791/NEW-Childrens-Bureau-Instructions-Chafee-Funding-for-Youth.htm>



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: CRAIG STEVENSON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-397-1274	
REPRESENTING: KIDS WIN MISSOURI		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF POLICY & ADVOCACY	
ADDRESS: 3250 E HIGHWAY 124			
CITY: HALLSVILLE		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65255
EMAIL: cstevenson@kidswinmissouri.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 9:13 AM
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Mister Chair and Members of the Committee: My name is Craig Stevenson and I'm the director of policy and advocacy for Kids Win Missouri. We advocate on issues of child well-being ranging from early childhood education, foster care issues, health care, and other issues of child well-being. Thank you to Rep. Sauls for bringing HB 1335 before the General Assembly and the committee today. We support and encourage passage of the bill. During the pandemic, the federal government has encouraged states to take extraordinary measures to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and ability for youth who are nearing or in the process of aging out are ready to succeed. One of the options on the table for states is for a youth to remain in foster care during the pandemic. Each youth's situation is unique and should be considered solely based on their circumstances and what's in the best interest of that youth in foster care. However, this is a tool that the state should have in its toolbox and we encourage passage to best serve our children. With that, I thank you for your time, and we ask that you support HB 1335. I'm happy to take any questions by email at cstevenson@kidswinmissouri.org or by phone at 573-397-1274. Craig Stevenson
Director of Policy and Advocacy
Kids Win Missouri



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KATHERINE RODGERS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: kathy.rodgers@courts.mo.gov	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 4:39 PM
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Our office (Office of the Guardian ad Litem, Jackson County Family Court) represents approximately half of the children in foster care in Jackson County. We have almost 50 youth that would benefit from this law. Many of our older youth have struggled as a result of the co-vid pandemic. This bill would help them in this time by allowing them to remain in foster care or to return to foster care. No state funds will be required to implement this bill because the federal government provided additional money through The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Public Law 116-94 to fund youth's needs. It is my understanding that the Department of Social Services believes that it cannot comply with this law or access any of the available dollars because of Missouri law that say that foster care ends no later than the youth's 21st birthday. As a result youth are facing homelessness and other challenges. In addition, this bill is needed because at least one division of the Jackson County Family Court has recently released several individuals turning 21 years old from the Court's jurisdiction. Although the Court ordered Children's Division to comply with the federal law in its orders releasing jurisdiction, the lack of continued court jurisdiction means that Children's Division is not held accountable for its compliance with the federal law, or lack thereof. As Children's Division has not offered to continue providing needed services to these young people, many individuals are currently without needed services and financial support, with no plan in place by Children's Division to ensure compliance with the federal law. This has tangible, detrimental effects on the young people who are cut off from supportive services. This bill would provide a clear directive to Children's Division to comply with the federal law and continue to provide much needed support to young people.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: LORI ROSS		PHONE NUMBER: 816-350-0215	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FOSTER ADOPT CONNECT		TITLE: PRESIDENT/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	
ADDRESS: 13600 EAST 37TH TERRACE SOUTH			
CITY: INDEPENDENCE		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64057
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MARY CHANT		PHONE NUMBER: 573-303-6765	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI COALITION OF CHILDRENS AGENCIES		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 213 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE; SUITE 101			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MO DEL VILLAR		PHONE NUMBER: 816-929-6166	
REPRESENTING: AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 406 WEST 34TH; SUITE 420			
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64111
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CAITLIN WHALEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 221 WEST HIGH STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: KELLY SCHULTZ		PHONE NUMBER: 573-522-8686	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: OFFICE OF CHILD ADVOCATE		TITLE: DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 301 WEST HIGH STREET; TRUMAN BUILDING ROOM 680			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2021 12:00 AM	
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