

**Summary of the “*Preventing Sex Trafficking and
Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act*”
February 14, 2014**

The *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act* would require states to take steps to identify, prevent, and address sex trafficking of youth in foster care. This bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Reichert (R-WA) and Ranking Member Doggett (D-TX) builds on H.R. 2744 and H.R. 1732, related legislation introduced by Rep. Paulsen (R-MN) and Rep. Bass (D-CA), respectively. The *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act* also would improve the lives of youth in foster care by ensuring they have more normal opportunities and experiences, while also providing them with tools they need to become successful adults. Below is a summary of major provisions in the bill.

1. Identify victims of child sex trafficking and determine appropriate services for the child.

- a. States must develop methods to screen and identify victims of child sex trafficking and those who are at risk of becoming victims, including by demonstrating they are providing relevant training for caseworkers. (Section 101)
- b. States must report children identified as victims of sex trafficking within 24 hours to law enforcement authorities, report missing or abducted children for entry into the National Crime Information Center at the FBI and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, describe how they will provide services to victims (including how they coordinate efforts across agencies), and make information on services available to the public. (Section 102)
- c. States must implement plans to rapidly locate a child missing from foster care, determine why the child ran away from care, and determine whether the child was a victim of sex trafficking while missing from care. (Section 103)

2. Improve data on child sex trafficking and services provided to victims.

- a. HHS must report to Congress information on children who run away from foster care, state efforts to provide services to child victims of sex trafficking, and state efforts to ensure children in foster care maintain long-lasting connections to caring adults. (Section 104)

- b. States must submit data on child sex trafficking victims through the existing data system used to collect information on youth in foster care. (Section 301)
 - c. HHS must report information on children living in group homes as part of the annual report on outcomes for children in foster care. (Section 302)
- 3. Ensure youth in foster care can lead more normal lives as a way of preventing sex trafficking.**
 - a. States must implement a “reasonable and prudent parent” standard allowing foster parents to make more day-to-day decisions for youth in their care (such as allowing them to play sports or spend time with friends). (Section 201)
- 4. Ensure states do more to quickly move kids out of foster care and into loving families.**
 - a. For children under age 16, states could no longer designate long-term foster care as a goal for a child (a status called “Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement” or APPLA, which indicates the state does not plan to return the child home or place them in an adoptive home, with a relative, or with a legal guardian). For children age 16 and older who have long-term foster care as a goal, states must document ongoing efforts to place children in a permanent home and explain why other options are not in the best interests of the child. (Section 202)
- 5. Ensure youth in foster care are better prepared for a successful adulthood.**
 - a. Youth in foster care age 14 or older would be allowed to help develop their own case plan, including selecting individuals to be part of the team preparing their plan. (Section 203)
 - b. To better equip former foster youth for the adult world, states must ensure youth age 14 or older leaving foster care after six months in care have a birth certificate, Social Security card, health insurance information, medical records, and (if over 18) a bank account. (Section 204). *Note that this provision may result in some increased federal spending according to the Congressional Budget Office. This increased spending will be offset with reduced spending elsewhere as the bill moves ahead to ensure the legislation does not add to the deficit.*