

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 7995
OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF MISSOURI**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Chafee Opportunities
3 for New Networks and Existing Connection Trust Act”
4 or the “CONNECT Act”.

**5 SEC. 2. UPDATING THE PURPOSES OF THE JOHN H.
6 CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD.
7**

8 (a) UPDATING OF PURPOSES.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(a) of the Social
10 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677(a)) is amended—

11 (A) by striking paragraph (2);

12 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and
13 (3) through (7) as paragraphs (3) through (8),
14 respectively; and

15 (C) by inserting after “conducted—” the
16 following:

17 “(1) to help children who have experienced fos-
18 ter care at age 14 or older to develop and maintain

1 sustained, supportive relationships with adults (in-
2 cluding kin or fictive kin who are not serving as
3 placement), mentors, and peers (including peers who
4 have experienced foster care), with a goal of pro-
5 viding multiple and varied paths to reduce isolation
6 and ensuring that the youth develop lifelong connec-
7 tions and support networks;

8 “(2) to support youth still in foster care who
9 have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in
10 exercising the rights referred to in section 475A to
11 participate in developing their permanency plan and
12 receive written information about available services
13 and steps the agency is taking to support the plan,
14 as well as to facilitate pre- and post-permanency
15 peer support, mentoring, connections with kin, and
16 referrals to additional appropriate programs and
17 services to help youth achieve their permanency
18 goals;”.

19 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
20 by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date that
21 is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

22 (b) GUIDANCE.—Within 1 year after the date of the
23 enactment of this Act and after consulting with youth with
24 lived experience in foster care, the Secretary of Health and
25 Human Services shall issue guidance to States and Tribal

1 child welfare agencies regarding the purposes set forth in
2 paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 477(a) of the Social Se-
3 curity Act, that includes, at a minimum—

4 (1) examples of services and support eligible for
5 Federal funding under part B of title IV of such
6 Act, under part E of such title as part of completing
7 and following the case plan requirements provided
8 for in section 475A of such Act, or under section
9 477 of such Act, including individual youth support,
10 family support, and peer support to engage youth
11 during reunification, guardianship, or adoption pro-
12 ceedings;

13 (2) best practices for facilitating peer support,
14 mentoring, and the development and maintenance of
15 lifelong connections, including practices that support
16 sibling, tribal, and community connections, including
17 minimum qualifications and training for persons
18 providing mentoring and peer support;

19 (3) standards of outreach to and notification of
20 eligible youth, including youth with a planned per-
21 manent living arrangement, to ensure referrals to
22 appropriate programs and services; and

23 (4) protocols for documentation of support and
24 relationship-building activities under section 477 of
25 such Act that are required by section 475A of such

1 Act to be included in a child's case plan, sufficient
2 to permit review under the case review system de-
3 scribed in section 475(5) of such Act.

