

# Supporting America's Children and Families Act (H.R. 9076)

September 19, 2024

On September 18, 2024, the House passed the Supporting America's Children and Families Act (H.R. 9076, as amended), 405-10. The House-passed bill incorporates the texts of two bills as unanimously approved by the House Ways and Means Committee in July: the Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act (H.R. 9076, Title I) and the Strengthening State and Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act (H.R. 7906). The Congressional Budget Office estimates that, combined, these measures would reduce federal spending by \$136 million across FY2024-FY2034.

## Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families (Title I)

Title I of H.R. 9076 would extend funding authorizations and make amendments to child welfare programs included in Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (SSA), including the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) programs.

Under those programs, all states (including the District of Columbia and five territories) and numerous tribes receive formula grant funding to support a broad range of services to children and families. A portion of PSSF program funding must be reserved to support the Court Improvement Program (CIP), Regional Partnership Grants (RPGs), and Monthly Caseworker Visit (MCV) grants, and for evaluation and technical assistance. In each of FY2018-FY2024, final appropriations laws have also directed some PSSF funding for kinship navigator programs. Total FY2024 funding for the CWS and PSSF programs was \$667 million (after sequestration of PSSF mandatory funds).

Title I of H.R. 9076 would extend the authorization of appropriations for the IV-B programs through FY2029. It would maintain discretionary authorizations at current law levels but with FY2026 would raise the annual PSSF mandatory funding to \$420 million (+\$75 million). Most of the additional mandatory funds would increase formula funding to state and tribal child welfare agencies for child and family services (+\$55 million). Remaining amounts would increase the annual mandatory set-asides for CIP to \$40 million (+\$10 million) and for RPGs to \$30 million (+\$10 million).

Other amendments appear intended to boost availability of community-based resources for families, through family resource centers and electronic portals to connect community resources with specific

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needs, and to clarify or allow access to PSSF services for youth (up to age 26) and kinship families. Title I of H.R. 9076 would explicitly authorize use of PSSF funds for short-term, non-recurring benefits (e.g., utility payments) to address a family crisis that might otherwise lead to a child's foster care entry. Further, it would revise CWS or PSSF plans to

- require policies to [prevent separation of families solely due to poverty](#),
- direct states to inform parents and children about available [independent legal representation](#) in child welfare proceedings,
- add attention to meeting mental health needs of children in foster care, and
- call for standards for use of virtual caseworker visits for youth in care at age 18 or older.

States/tribes would be required to consult with families and youth with experience in the child welfare system, and to report on how they incorporate youth guidance in their child and family services plans.

A full 3% of all CWS and PSSF funding would be directed to formula grants for [tribal child and family service programs](#), funding reserved for [tribal CIP](#) would be doubled (from \$1 million to \$2 million), and HHS would be required to streamline Title IV-B reporting for certain tribes. To improve compliance with the [Indian Child Welfare Act](#), Title I of H.R. 9076 directs states to consult with tribes on specific ICWA requirements (including timely notice of custody proceedings involving Indian children and recordkeeping related to [active efforts](#) to prevent the break-up of Indian families, transfers of jurisdiction for custody proceedings, and termination of parental rights proceedings). HHS would be required to consult with tribes and produce guidance for states on [ICWA compliance](#), including through use of data.

Title I of H.R. 9076 would amend the SSA to reserve out of discretionary PSSF funding (for each of FY2026-FY2029), \$10 million for competitive grants to support [kinship navigator programs](#) and \$5 million for competitive grants to accelerate development of [prevention services that meet Family First practice standards](#). Further, it would increase the reservation of mandatory PSSF funding as of FY2026 for MCV grants to \$26 million (+6 million). While it would eliminate a \$6 million set-aside of PSSF mandatory funds to HHS for evaluation and technical assistance, it would maintain the current law 3.3% reservation of PSSF discretionary funds for those purposes.

Additionally, Title I of H.R. 9076 would authorize \$35 million in annual discretionary appropriations (FY2026-FY2029) to support collaborations between state agencies for child welfare and adult correctional facilities to carry out projects that promote meaningful relationships between incarcerated parents and their children in foster care.

Title I of H.R. 9076 would make other changes, including requiring HHS to review and address administrative burden under the Title IV-B program, produce guidance on improved data collection and reporting on youth in residential treatment facilities, and report on post-adoption/guardianship services.

## Strengthening State and Tribal Child Support Enforcement (Title II)

Title II of H.R. 9076 would expand access to federal tax information (FTI) for specified child support enforcement (CSE) programs and their contractors. All states (including the District of Columbia and three territories) and [61 tribal nations](#) operate [CSE programs](#) pursuant to [Title IV-D of the SSA](#). Certain CSE services (e.g., the [Federal Tax Refund Offset Program](#)) are supported via the exchange of FTI. State and local IV-D program access to that data is governed by the [Internal Revenue Code §6103](#). FTI may only be accessed by contractors of those programs on a limited basis. In addition, tribal IV-D programs were not explicitly included in the law that allowed state and local CSE programs to have FTI access.

Title II of H.R. 9076 would seek to provide tribal IV-D programs with FTI access comparable to that of state and local CSE programs. It also would allow contractors of state, local, and tribal IV-D agencies to have comparable access to federal tax data that agency employees have for IV-D purposes. For further

information about this proposal, see CRS Insight IN11748, *Overview of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Access to Taxpayer Data and Recent Legislation (S. 3154 and H.R. 7906)*.

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