

House Concurrent Resolution No. 53

95TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE CORCORAN (Sponsor), OXFORD, CARTER, PACE,
SCHIEFFER, ENGLUND AND McDONALD (Co-sponsors).

2458L.04I

1 **Whereas**, the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 established the John
2 H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program which replaced the former Independent Living
3 Program and expanded services for former foster care youth ages 18 to 21; and

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5 **Whereas**, under the Chafee Program, independent living services are provided to
6 young people ages 14 - 21 to assist them as they transition from foster care to adulthood; and

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8 **Whereas**, as of December 31, 2008, there were 3,501 youths between the ages of
9 14 and 21 in the custody of the Children's Division. These young people do not have parents or
10 family to turn to after they leave the state's foster care system; and

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12 **Whereas**, in recent years, Missouri has averaged approximately 9200 children in
13 foster care each year and in any given year, approximately 1.7% of those who have aged out of
14 foster care enter prison at an average cost to the state of \$16,432 per year, resulting in more than
15 \$2.5 million each year in state resources expended on them in the correction system, so that
16 failure to address the problems of aging out has a clear social cost; and

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18 **Whereas**, one of the unique needs and challenge for the state is maximizing
19 resources to support these young people in transitioning into successful adult roles and
20 responsibilities after leaving the state's foster care system; and

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22 **Whereas**, the Missouri Aging Out Task Force, consisting of 17 members from
23 public state agencies and private business, was established in August 2008 to "assess and tackle

24 the critical and unique needs of young Missourians coming of age in the state's care as foster
25 children"; and

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27 **Whereas**, six core areas have been identified for intervention: education,
28 employment, lifelong connections, support for transition to adulthood, health, and cross system
29 collaboration; and

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31 **Whereas**, the Task Force was requested to develop a three-year plan, including
32 potential legislative priorities, strategies to promote and expand existing resources, and
33 additional training for those dedicated to helping Missouri teenagers as they approach aging out;
34 and

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36 **Whereas**, with the submission of the final report of the Task Force, it is imperative
37 that the work of the Task Force in making recommendations and developing a three-year plan
38 be continued and built upon; and

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40 **Whereas**, the Missouri General Assembly has a vital role in establishing legislative
41 priorities and enacting enabling legislation as needed to implement the recommendations and
42 plan of the Task Force; and

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44 **Whereas**, with the enactment of the federal Promoting Safe and Stable Families
45 Amendments of 2001, payments were made available to the states to implement the Education
46 and Training Opportunity Program which makes available opportunities for youth to receive
47 postsecondary education and training; and

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49 **Whereas**, currently, the Children's Division uses the Chafee Program funds to
50 contract with providers throughout the state. The providers work with case managers, foster
51 parents, and youth and are responsible for local program coordination, service delivery,
52 community resource development, ongoing consultation and education to staff and foster parents;
53 and

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55 **Whereas**, among the services provided, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities
56 Initiative (JCYOI) is a partnership with Jackson County Children's Division. JCYOI is a national
57 endeavor to assist youth in foster care in making successful transitions to self-sufficiency and
58 independence. JCYOI's goal is to bring together people and resources needed to assist youth in
59 making the necessary contacts they need for employment, education, housing, health care, and
60 supportive personal and community connections; and

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62 **Whereas**, JCYOI began partnering with Missouri in December 2001 in the Kansas
63 City area. The Children's Division continues to work with JCYOI to accomplish three key
64 strategies: youth leadership boards, community partner boards, and Opportunity Passports; and

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66 **Whereas**, the Opportunity Passport is designed to organize resources and create
67 opportunities for foster and aftercare youth by assisting youth in accumulating assets and direct
68 experience with money management. Youth who are selected to receive a Passport receive an
69 individual development account (IDA), a personal debit account, and a variety of available
70 community services at reduced rates or obtain preferential treatment; and

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72 **Whereas**, these services should be available to all youth and young people
73 transitioning from foster care to adulthood; and

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75 **Whereas**, state agencies, community partners, and national foundations and
76 initiatives need to be developed and implemented on a statewide basis:

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78 **Now, therefore, be it resolved** by the members of the House of
79 Representatives of the Ninety-fifth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate
80 concurring therein, that the recommendations and plan of the Missouri Aging Out Task Force
81 should be reviewed, implemented, and built upon to ensure that all foster children have the
82 opportunity to receive services as they transition from foster care to adulthood; and

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84 **Be it further resolved** that the Speaker of the House of Representatives and
85 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate appoint a Joint Interim Committee on Foster Care

86 Transition that is authorized to function during the legislative interim between the First and
87 Second Regular Sessions of the Ninety-fifth General Assembly to comprehensively study and
88 make recommendations regarding expanding foster care transitional services and increasing
89 funding for programs such as Opportunity Passport and educational savings accounts; and
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91 **Be it further resolved** that the Joint Interim Committee shall prepare a final
92 report, together with its recommendations for any legislative action deemed necessary for
93 submission to the General Assembly prior to commencement of the Second Regular Session of
94 the Ninety-fifth General Assembly; and
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96 **Be it further resolved** that the Joint Interim Committee may solicit input
97 and information necessary to fulfill its obligations, including but not limited to soliciting input
98 and information from any state department or agency the Joint Interim Committee deems
99 relevant, schools, foster parents, child advocates, the courts, and the general public; and
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101 **Be it further resolved** that the staffs of House Research, the Joint
102 Committee on Legislative Research, and Senate Research shall provide such legal, research,
103 clerical, technical, and bill drafting services as the Joint Interim Committee may require in the
104 performance of its duties; and
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106 **Be it further resolved** that the actual and necessary expenses of the Joint
107 Interim Committee, its members, and any staff assigned to the Joint Interim Committee incurred
108 by the Joint Interim Committee shall be paid by the Joint Contingent Fund.

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