



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS  
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

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## **Kansas Governor Laura Kelly Signs Nation's First Executive Order to Comprehensively Reform Foster Youth Federal Benefits**

**Topeka, Kan.** - Today, Governor Laura Kelly signed the nation's first executive order to comprehensively reform the taking of federal benefits from foster youth. The order aims to ensure abused and neglected children are not deprived of vital resources while in care and to support their transition to independence.

An estimated 10-20% of foster youth qualify for federal social security, disability, or veteran survivor benefits. Until now, Kansas took approximately \$9 million annually from these benefits to cover the costs of foster care services. The executive order, [modeled after reforms](#) by the [Center for the Rights of Abused Children](#), halts this practice and strengthens access to federal programs, improving outcomes for foster youth, particularly those with disabilities.

Under the new order, the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) will screen for eligibility and apply for federal benefits on behalf of children in care. If DCF acts as fiduciary, it will conserve the benefits in a trust or savings account while allowing the child to access funds for additional needs like extracurricular activities. The agency will work to identify other adults who may wish to apply to manage the funds until the child turns 18.

Governor Kelly's order also requires DCF to provide annual reports to ensure transparency and financial literacy training to help foster youth and guardians navigate these accounts.

"Foster youth deserve every opportunity to succeed, and preserving access to federal benefits is crucial to supporting their growth," Governor Laura Kelly said. "This executive order ensures they have the necessary resources to access education, healthcare, and housing, which will allow them to build strong futures."

"These reforms will change lives, especially for youth aging out of foster care," said Darcy Olsen, CEO of the Center for the Rights of Abused Children. "Governor Kelly is setting a powerful example for others to follow."

Governor Kelly's executive order is a historic commitment to the well-being of Kansas foster youth, strengthening the state's support for its most vulnerable children.

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**About the Center for the Rights of Abused Children:** The Center for the Rights of Abused Children believes every child deserves a safe and loving home. Join our mission today, [thecenterforchildren.org](http://thecenterforchildren.org).

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