



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2025

Center for the Rights of Abused Children Applauds Federal Action to Protect Benefits Owed to Children in Foster Care – Arizona’s Early Leadership Charts a Path for the Nation

Phoenix, Ariz. - Today the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sent letters to 39 governors calling for immediate action to end the practice of state child welfare agencies diverting earned Social Security survivor benefits from children in the foster care system. ACF’s letter urges states to ensure these funds are preserved for the child’s unmet needs and future support.

The Center for the Rights of Abused Children strongly applauds this federal initiative and stands ready to assist states throughout the country in implementing this important reform.

Arizona was the first state in the nation to fully ban the practice of intercepting foster youth’s federal benefits. In 2023, [Governor Katie Hobbs signed House Bill 2559 into law](#), which requires that federal disability and survivor benefits belonging to children in foster care be conserved for their benefit rather than spent by the agency. This law was a landmark step in protecting the property rights and future security of vulnerable youth in care.

“Today’s action by ACF is a watershed moment for children in foster care,” said Darcy Olsen, Founder & CEO of the Center for the Rights of Abused Children. “Arizona led the way by being the first state to protect these federal benefits comprehensively for all children statewide, and that early leadership now positions us to help other states comply with and adopt similar life-changing policies.”

Federal data show that far too often state agencies have used federal benefits that rightfully belong to children — including Social Security survivor benefits — to offset administrative costs. This practice leaves children without financial resources at a time when they need support for education, housing, transportation, and other essential needs during and after care.

ACF’s announcement comes as only 11 states have enacted policies to conserve these benefits for foster youth’s direct needs. The federal effort, backed by the Social Security

Administration, aims to provide resources and technical assistance to help the remaining states make this important change.

“Arizona has proven that this reform is not only possible, but essential,” said Olsen. “The Center is prepared to support governors, legislators, and child welfare leaders nationwide in adopting child-centered policies that preserve benefits and give youth a real chance to succeed.”

For more information on the Center's work to protect the rights of abused and neglected children, visit [Center for the Rights of Abused Children](#).

Contact: Brad Galbraith, Director of Policy at brad@thecenterforchildren.org, (602) 710-1135 x710.