



Ohio Grandparent/  
Kinship Coalition

Where Your Voice is Heard!

The Honorable Rob Portman  
United States Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Portman,

We are writing to urge your support of the *Improved Employment Outcomes for Foster Youth Act*, federal legislation that will soon be introduced by Senator Bob Casey to make transition age foster youth a target group under the *Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)*, thereby creating an incentive for employers to expand job opportunities for these very vulnerable youth.

Established in 1996, the *Work Opportunity Tax Credit* is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain targeted groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. This provides a fiscal incentive for employers to hire individuals who face challenges in entering the workplace, making it more difficult for them to attain independence and self-sufficiency. In Ohio, the WOTC helps thousands of residents find gainful employment each year, while significantly reducing state expenditures on public assistance.

Throughout the WOTC's history, there has been an ever-evolving list of target groups – however, foster care youth are not included. This represents an untapped opportunity to improve employment outcomes for foster youth during their transition to young adulthood, and to empower former foster youth to earn competitive permanent employment and be connected to a career path in order for them to achieve complete self-sufficiency.

Research demonstrates that youth emancipating from the foster care system face challenges in securing steady employment and earning a living wage. The WOTC can encourage the private sector to play a pivotal role in improving the situation of foster youth, as it has done for other Americans with employment challenges. For these reasons, we support expanding the WOTC to include transition age foster youth as a target population and urge your support of the *Improved Employment Outcomes for Foster Youth Act*.

Given your leadership in preserving the *Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit*, and your longstanding commitment to supporting our state's foster youth, we respectfully request that you sign your name on as an original cosponsor to Senator Casey's pending legislation. Thank you for your consideration of this important request and for your ongoing support of Ohio's youth.

Sincerely,

**ACTION Ohio** (*Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now*)

**OHIO YAB** (*Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board*)

**Ohio Children's Alliance**

**Ohio Federation for Health Equity and Social Justice**

**Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition**

**PCSAO** (*Public Children Services Association of Ohio*)