

# CRS Report for Congress

## Runaway and Homeless Youth: Reauthorization Legislation and Issues in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

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## Summary

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) was signed into law in 1974 as Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415) and was last reauthorized in 2003 (P.L. 108-96) for FY2004 through FY2008. RHYA authorizes funding for programs to support runaway and homeless youth, as well as related training, research, and other activities. These programs and activities are administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families.

Two bills to reauthorize RHYA are under consideration in the House and Senate. On March 4, 2008, Representative John Yarmuth introduced the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (H.R. 5524). On June 9, 2008, the House passed the bill under suspension of the rules. On May 6, 2008, Senator Patrick Leahy introduced the Runaway and Homeless Youth Protection Act (S. 2982), and on May 22, 2008, the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported the bill. S. 2982 was incorporated into the Advancing America's Priorities Act (S. 3297), an omnibus bill introduced on July 22, 2008. A motion for the Senate to consider S. 3297 was withdrawn on July 27, 2008, and no further action has been taken.

This report discusses the two reauthorization bills and includes a table with a side-by-side comparison of their provisions, along with current law and regulation. The bills share the common goals of broadening services for and awareness of runaway and homeless youth and expanding congressional oversight of the programs and activities established by RHYA. The means for meeting these goals include amending provisions related to program funding, requirements, accountability, and outreach. For example, the legislation would amend the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to increase authorization of appropriations over current levels for the three programs that provide direct services to youth: the Basic Center Program (BCP), Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach Program (SOP). The bills would also permit youth to remain in BCP and TLP shelters for a longer period and enable the HHS Secretary to reallocate any unused BCP funds from one state to other states. Other major proposed changes would require HHS to regularly submit a report to Congress that describes the incidence and prevalence of runaway and homeless youth. Although the areas addressed by the three bills are similar, notable differences include the definition of "homeless youth" for purposes of the BCP, as well as funding levels for certain activities under RHYA.

Several issues regarding runaway and homeless youth have become prominent. One issue, reflected in the pending legislation, is the amount of funding allocated to grantees under the three direct-service programs. Grantees have raised the concern that, although Congress has periodically increased funding authorization for RHYA, funding for individual grantees has remained relatively stable. A second issue is the lack of outcome data for youth once they leave RHYA-funded facilities. Other issues include changing personnel needs within grantee organizations and concerns that runaway and homeless youth face particular challenges as they transition to adulthood. This report will be updated as significant legislative activity occurs.

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# Runaway and Homeless Youth: Reauthorization Legislation and Issues in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) was signed into law in 1974 as Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415) and was last reauthorized in 2003 (P.L. 108-96) for FY2004 through FY2008. The act authorizes funding for grant programs that provide direct services to youth — the Basic Center Program (BCP), Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach Program (SOP) — and related training, research, and other activities.<sup>1</sup> These programs and activities are administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau in the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families. The Basic Center Program provides temporary shelter, counseling, and after care services to runaway and homeless youth under age 18 and their families, while the Transitional Living Program is targeted to older youth ages 16 to 21. Youth who use the TLP receive longer-term housing with supportive services. The Street Outreach Program provides education, treatment, counseling, and referrals for runaway, homeless, and street youth who have been subjected to or are at risk of being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation.

Two bills to reauthorize RHYA are under consideration in the House and Senate.<sup>2</sup> On March 4, 2008, Representative John Yarmuth introduced the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (H.R. 5524). On June 9, 2008, the House passed the bill under suspension of the rules. The version of the bill that was passed contains most of the same provisions as the original version. On May 6, 2008, Senator Patrick Leahy introduced the Runaway and Homeless Youth Protection Act (S. 2982), and on May 22, 2008, the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed program information, see CRS Report RL33785, *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programs, and Emerging Issues*, by Adrienne L. Fernandes.

<sup>2</sup> The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress has conducted three hearings concerning RHYA reauthorization: (1) U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Education and Labor. Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities. *Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children: Perspectives on Helping the Nation's Vulnerable Youth*. Hearings. 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, July 24, 2007. Transcript available at [[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_house\\_hearings&docid=f:36729.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_house_hearings&docid=f:36729.pdf)]. (2) U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Ways and Means. Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support. *Disconnected and Disadvantaged Youth*. Hearings. 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, June 19, 2007. Written testimony available at [<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=569>]. (3) U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *Living on the Street: Finding Solutions to Protect Runaway and Homeless Youth*. 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, April 29, 2008. Written testimony available at [<http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=3312>].

S. 2982 to the full Senate.<sup>3</sup> The reported version includes an amendment to substitute the original bill with new language, most of which is derived from that original bill. S. 2982 was incorporated into the Advancing America's Priorities Act (S. 3297), an omnibus bill that was introduced on July 22, 2008. A motion for the Senate to consider S. 3297 was withdrawn on July 27, 2008, and no further action has been taken.

This report first provides an overview of pending RHYA reauthorization provisions, followed by a discussion of related issues. **Table A-1** at the end of the report provides a side-by-side comparison of H.R. 5524 and S. 2982, along with current law and regulation.

## Overview of Provisions

H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 share the common goals of broadening services for and awareness of runaway and homeless youth and expanding congressional oversight of the programs established by RHYA. The means for meeting the two primary goals include amending provisions related to program funding, requirements, accountability, and outreach. The bills include several of the same provisions; however, substantive differences include:

- **Funding.** H.R. 5524 would authorize funding for a new homeless youth awareness campaign at \$3 million for each of FY2009 through FY2013, while S. 2982 would authorize \$3 million for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for each of FY2010 through FY2013. The bills also differ on the authorized annual minimum levels of BCP funding available for states and territories.
- **Requirements.** H.R. 5524 would allow youth to remain in a program funded under the Basic Center Program and Transitional Living Program longer than is provided under current regulation, if permitted under state or local law. S. 2982 would extend the stay for youth in shelters funded under both programs, regardless of exceptions provided under state or local law.
- **Accountability.** H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would direct HHS to routinely conduct, directly or indirectly, an incidence and prevalence study of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26, as well as the characteristics of a representative sample of these youth. The provisions concerning the study are nearly identical in the bills; however, H.R. 5524 requires HHS to consult with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness on the study.

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<sup>3</sup> A third bill, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Reauthorization of 2008 was introduced on August 3, 2007, by Representative Raul Grijalva as Title II, Subtitle A of A Place to Call Home Act (H.R. 3409), an omnibus youth policy and child welfare bill. However, the bill has not been voted on by the House Education and Labor Committee or the full House.

- **Outreach.** The two bills would require HHS to conduct a national homeless youth awareness campaign. S. 2982 proposes slightly different purposes of the campaign and uses of funds for the campaign, compared to H.R. 5524.

Below is a discussion of the bills' similarities and differences, as well as background on current law and practice. The areas described are the primary provisions in the respective bills and do not encompass all aspects of the legislation.

## Funding

P.L. 108-96 authorizes funding for all parts<sup>4</sup> of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, except the Street Outreach Program, at \$105 million for FY2004 and such sums as may be necessary for FY2005 through FY2008. The Street Outreach Program is authorized to receive such sums as may be necessary for FY2004 through FY2008. The reauthorization bills seek to increase authorization of appropriations for FY2009 to \$150 million and such sums as may be necessary for FY2010 through FY2013 for all parts of the act (except the Street Outreach Program, the national homeless youth awareness campaign, and the prevalence study). The bills would authorize \$30 million for the SOP for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for FY2010 through FY2013.

Further, the two bills would authorize up to \$3 million for the national homeless youth campaign for each of FY2009 through FY2013, while S. 2982 would authorize \$3 million for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for the other years. Both bills would authorize such sums as may be necessary for the periodic estimate assessment.<sup>5</sup>

H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would also amend the funding structure for the Basic Center Program. Funding for the Basic Center Program and related training and other activities is allocated among states and territories. Under current law, states and territories may receive a minimum annual allotment of \$100,000 and \$45,000, respectively, in BCP funds. Funding allocated for states in excess of \$100,000 is determined by each state's relative share of the population under age 18. H.R. 5524 would increase the annual minimum funding available for states to \$150,000, while S. 2982 would increase the state minimum to \$200,000. Both bills seek to increase the annual minimum funding for territories to \$70,000.

H.R. 5524 would also provide that funding for each state in FY2009 and FY2010 is to be no less than the amount allotted to that state for FY2008 (the bill is

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<sup>4</sup> Currently, Part A pertains to the BCP; Part B pertains to the TLP; Part C pertains to the National Communication System; Part D pertains to coordinating, training, research, and other activities; Part E pertains to the SOP; and Part F pertains to general provisions, such as assistance to potential grantees, lease of surplus federal facilities, reports, records, definitions, and authorization of appropriations, among other provisions.

<sup>5</sup> Unlike H.R. 5524, S. 2982 would include a conforming amendment to exclude the periodic estimate assessment (as proposed as Sec. 345 under Part D) from receiving funding that is allocated to activities under Part C or Part D.

silent on a minimum for territories in those years). S. 2982 does not propose this change. Further, in contrast to current law, the proposed bills would enable the HHS Secretary to reallocate any funds from one state to another that are not obligated before the end of a fiscal year. The two bills do not propose changes to the funding structure for the Transitional Living Program and Street Outreach Program. Funds for these programs are allocated competitively by HHS to community-based organizations.

## Requirements

**Length of Stay.** The reauthorization bills propose to change program requirements related to the length of time that youth are eligible to stay in Basic Center Program and Transitional Living Program facilities; the authorized use of funds for the TLP; and the applicants that are prioritized under the Street Outreach Program.

Current regulation specifies that youth may remain at a BCP shelter for up to 15 days. H.R. 5524 would permit youth to stay at a shelter for up to 21 days if the project is located in a state or locality with an applicable law or regulation that permits a length of stay longer than 15 days. S. 2982 would provide that youth may be sheltered for up to 21 days at a BCP shelter, however, the bill does not specify that the project must be located in a state or locality that allows for this longer stay.

Current law specifies that shelter at the TLP may be provided for up to 540 days (18 months), and youth under 18 may remain in the program an additional 180 days (six months) or until the youth turns 18, whichever comes first. H.R. 5524 would add that a youth may remain in the program for a continuous period of 635 days (approximately 21 months) if permitted under state or local law or regulation. S. 2982 would amend the language under current law to allow youth to remain in the program continuously for up to 635 days, and permit a youth under age 18 to remain in the program until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or 180 days after the 635-day period, whichever comes first.

**Definition of “Homeless Youth” and “Runaway Youth”.** Under current law, “homeless youth” for purposes of the BCP is defined as youth more than 18 years old for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and for whom no other safe alternative living arrangement exists. H.R. 5524 would amend the first clause to define “homeless youth” as youth less than 18 years old or an older maximum age if the BCP center is located in a state or locality with a law or regulation that permits a higher age. S. 2982 does not propose to change this definition.

Further, under current law, “homeless youth” is defined for the TLP as an individual ages 16 to 21 for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and for whom no other safe alternative living arrangement exists. H.R. 5524 proposes to change the first clause of the definition to include an individual between the ages of 16 and 22 or an age exceeding 22 years old upon exiting the TLP project (as permitted under proposed Sec. 322(a)) so long as the participant enters the TLP project prior to reaching age 22. S. 2982 would also change the first clause by defining “homeless youth” as an individual between the ages of 16 and 22 and specifying that nothing in the clause is to prevent a participant who enters a TLP

project prior to reaching age 22 from being eligible for a continuous 635-day stay, as proposed under S. 2982.

Finally, under current regulation, a “runaway youth” is defined as a person under age 18 who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her *family*. S. 2982 would insert similar language into law to include youth who leave home or their place of residence without the permission of his or her *parent or legal guardian*. H.R. 5524 does not propose to change this definition.

**TLP Plan.** To currently qualify for funding under the TLP, applicants must submit a plan to the HHS Secretary specifying that they will provide, *directly or indirectly, shelter and services*, among other types of assistance. H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would amend the law to require that applicants provide, *directly or by contract, shelter and to provide, directly or indirectly, services* and other assistance.

**Priority Applicants for the SOP and Research Projects.** Currently, the law requires that in selecting applicants to receive SOP grants, HHS is to prioritize non-profit private agencies with experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth, including youth living on the street. The bills would require that HHS also give priority to public agencies.

H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would also make changes to the priority areas for awarding grants for research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects. Currently, the Secretary is to give *special consideration* to proposed projects relating to these projects in nine priority areas that are specified in the law. For example, one of the priority areas concerns special needs of programs that place runaway and homeless youth in host family sites. H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would amend the law to state that the Secretary is to give *priority* to the priority areas. The bills would also modify the language about two of these priority areas, including to expand the description of the area concerning education-related projects for runaway and homeless youth, and add as a priority area programs that assist youth in obtaining and maintaining safe and stable housing. Another related change involves giving priority consideration to certain applicants. Under current law, the Secretary is to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth. The bills would add that the Secretary is to ensure selected applicants represent diverse geographic regions of the U.S. and carry out projects that serve diverse youth.

## Accountability

Provisions that seek to improve accountability of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act are found throughout the reauthorization bills.

**Performance Standards.** RHYA and accompanying regulations do not explicitly set forth performance standards for the grantees. However, grantees are collectively expected to meet certain performance measures established by the Office



of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process.<sup>6</sup> The performance measures are as follows:

- achieve the proportion of youth served in the TLP entering safe and appropriate settings directly after exiting care at 85% by FY2008 and maintain this level through FY2010 (long-term outcome measure);
- increase funding efficiency by increasing the percent of youth who complete the TLP by graduating or who leave ahead of schedule on the basis of opportunity (long-term efficiency measure);
- increase the percentage of TLP youth participants who are engaged in community service and service learning activities while in the program (outcome measure); and
- increase by 2% annually, beginning in FY2008, the proportion of youth who are prevented from running away through BCP in-home or off-site services as a percentage of all youth receiving such services, including those youth who must be fully admitted to the shelter despite such preventative efforts (outcome measure).

Data for these outcome measures are collected from each grantee through the NEO-RHYMIS (National Extranet Optimized Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System) reporting system, which includes a range of data elements on the characteristics and short-term outcomes of youth receiving services through the BCP, TLP, and SOP.<sup>7</sup> Further, during the grant application process, described below, applicants must discuss the results or benefits expected from their programs. For example, applicants are advised to identify quantitative outcomes for their proposed projects that will fulfill the program purpose and scope of services as described in RHYA and the grant announcement.

The proposed bills would amend RHYA to require that within one year after enactment, the HHS Secretary is to issue rules that specify performance standards for public and non-profit entities that receive BCP, TLP, and SOP grants. They would also require the Secretary to provide an opportunity for public comment before final rules for the performance standards are issued. In addition to these provisions, the bills would direct the Secretary to integrate the performance standards into the grantmaking, monitoring, and evaluations processes for the BCP, TLP, and SOP.

**Grant Review Process.** Applicants for BCP, TLP, and SOP funding are currently evaluated and rated by an independent review panel made up of non-federal reviewers who are experts in the field of runaway and homeless youth issues.<sup>8</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Detailed Assessment on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Assessment*, 2003 and U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Detailed Assessment on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Assessment*, 2007, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10001064.2006.html>]. (Hereafter PART 2003 or PART 2007.)

<sup>7</sup> For additional information about NEO-RHYMIS, see [[https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/custom\\_reports.html](https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/custom_reports.html)].

<sup>8</sup> For additional information about the grant review process, see archived grant funding (continued...)

review panel uses evaluation criteria to assign a score up to 100 for each applicant and to identify the application's strengths and weaknesses. The criteria are established in regulation<sup>9</sup> and described in greater detail in the grant announcements.

As set forth in the grant announcements, these criteria include (1) *approach* (i.e., the extent to which the application identifies the services that will be provided, required by and consistent with RHYA and FYSB program requirements, among other requirements); (2) *organizational profiles* (i.e., the extent to which the application demonstrates the organizational capacity necessary to oversee federal grants through an explanation of the organization's fiscal controls and governance structure, among other requirements); (3) *results or benefits expected* (i.e., the extent to which the applicant identifies quantitative outcomes for the proposed project that will fulfill the program purpose and scope of services as described in RHYA and the grant announcement, among other requirements); (4) *objectives and need for assistance* (i.e., the extent to which the applicant describes clear and appropriate program objectives that will fulfill the program purpose, and the extent to which the applicant describes a clear need for the proposed project through a discussion of the conditions of youth and families in the area to be served, among other requirements); (5) *staff and position data* (i.e., the extent to which the applicant includes an organizational chart that demonstrates the relationship between all positions (including consultants, sub-grants and/or contractors) to be funded through the grant, among other requirements); and (6) *budget and budget justification* (i.e., the extent to which a detailed line-item budget for the federal and non-federal share of project costs is included in the application and demonstrates how cost estimates were derived).

As further described in the grant announcements, the review panel's assigned scores assist the FYSB Associate Commissioner and program staff in considering applications. Applications are generally ranked in order of the average scores assigned by reviewers; however, the scores, in combination with other factors, determine whether an application is funded. These factors include, but are not limited to, comments of reviewers and government officials, HHS staff evaluation and input, geographic distribution, previous program performance of applicants, compliance with grant terms under previous HHS grants, audit reports, investigative reports, and an applicant's progress in resolving any final audit disallowance on previous FYSB or other federal agency grants. According to HHS, RHYA grants are highly competitive, and as a result, these various factors may prohibit well-qualified applicants from receiving funding.<sup>10</sup> Further, in some years, applicants with scores in the 90s have not been awarded grants because such a large number of applicants receive scores of 100 or close to 100.

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<sup>8</sup> (...continued)

announcements for the program, [[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_archive.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_archive.html)].

<sup>9</sup> 45 C.F.R. 1351.81.

<sup>10</sup> Based on correspondence with the Department of Health and Human Services on September 21, 2007.

HHS does not have an appeals process for unsuccessful applicants; however, in accordance with HHS's Awarding Agency Grants Administration Manual (AAGAM), unsuccessful applicants are notified by letter that they were not awarded funding, with a full explanation of the reasons the application was not funded.<sup>11</sup> The letter contains a compilation of review comments outlining the strengths and weaknesses of their application as identified by the panel of non-federal reviewers. Compilations are also available for successful applications; however, they are only sent at the request of these applicants. Scores are not automatically sent to any applicants but are available upon request.

H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would direct the Government Accountability Office to examine the process by which organizations apply for BCP, TLP, and SOP grants under RHYA. Specifically, GAO is to make findings and recommendations relating to (1) the Secretary's written responses to and other communications with unsuccessful applicants to determine if the information in the response is conveyed clearly; (2) the content of the grant applications and other associated documents to determine if these materials are presented in a way that gives an applicant a clear understanding of the information that is to be provided and the terminology used in the materials; (c) the peer review process (if any) for the grants; (d) the typical timeframe for responding to applicants and the efforts made by HHS staff to communicate about delayed funding decisions; and (e) the plans for implementation of RHYA-authorized technical assistance and training programs, and the effect of such programs on the application process for the grantees.<sup>12</sup>

**Prevalence and Incidence Studies.** The precise number of homeless and runaway youth is unknown due to their residential mobility and other factors, and RHYA is silent on whether HHS or any other entity is to approximate this number. These youth often eschew the shelter system for locations or areas that are not easily accessible to shelter workers and others who count the homeless and runaways.<sup>13</sup> Determining the number of homeless and runaway youth is further complicated by the lack of a standardized methodology for counting the population and inconsistent definitions of what it means to be homeless or a runaway.<sup>14</sup> In response to a 2002 congressional request through the appropriations process,<sup>15</sup> HHS submitted a report to Congress in 2003 that discusses a plan for developing estimates of the incidences

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, February 26, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> For information about recent changes to the training and technical assistance programs, see CRS Report RL33785, *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs*, by Adrienne L. Fernandes.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher L. Ringwalt et al., "The Prevalence of Homelessness Among Adolescents in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 88, no. 9 (September 1998), p. 1325.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The Senate Appropriations Committee made this request in S.Rept. 107-84 to accompany the Senate version of the Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill for 2002 (S. 1536). Companion legislation (H.R. 3061) was signed into law as P.L. 107-116. The report, *Incidence and Prevalence of Runaway and Homeless Youth*, is available at [[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design\\_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf)].

of runaway, throwaway, homeless, and street experiences among youth, as well as a plan for regularly monitoring incidence trends.<sup>16</sup>

The reauthorization bills seek to determine the number of youth who have run away or are homeless by requiring HHS to estimate, at five year intervals — beginning within two years of the enactment of the bills — the incidence and prevalence of the runaway and homeless youth population ages 13 to 26. The bills would also require HHS to assess the characteristics of these youth. HHS would be required to conduct a survey of and direct interviews with a representative sample of homeless youth ages 13 to 26 to determine past and current socioeconomic characteristics, barriers to obtaining housing and other services, and other information the Secretary determines useful, in consultation with states and other entities concerned with youth homelessness. The bills are silent regarding how the studies are to be conducted, except to say that the Secretary should make the estimate based on the best quantitative and qualitative social science research methods available. Further, if the Secretary enters into an agreement with a non-federal entity to carry out the assessment, the entity is to be a non-governmental organization or individual determined by the Secretary to have expertise in this type of research.

## Outreach

RHYA lacks specific provisions about methods for heightening public awareness about runaway and homeless youth. According to HHS, the agency funds outreach efforts to the public in three ways.<sup>17</sup> First, a portion of BCP and TLP funds are allocated for a national communications system to help homeless and runaway youth (or youth who are contemplating running away) through counseling, referrals, and providing a means for communicating with their families. With this funding, the National Runaway Switchboard, a non-profit organization, has administered a crisis hotline for youth and their families since FY1974. It has also provided outreach and educational materials on resources to assist runaway and homeless youth.<sup>18</sup> Second, the National Clearinghouse on Youth and Families, an FYSB-funded resource center, produces publications for the general public about the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program. Finally, according to HHS, RHYA grantees conduct local advocacy and outreach efforts, and public service announcements to attract youth eligible for services. As described in grant announcements for the BCP, TLP, and SOP, grant applicants are evaluated, in part, on the basis of their efforts to establish outreach efforts to youth, including minority sub-groups of youth, where applicable.

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, *Incidence and Prevalence of Homeless and Runaway Youth*, May 9, 2003; available at [[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design\\_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf)].

<sup>17</sup> Based on correspondence with the Department of Health and Human Services on March 20, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Educational and promotional materials are available on the National Runaway Switchboard's website, [<http://www.1800runaway.org/default.html>].

The reauthorization legislation seeks to more formally increase awareness among the general public of the issues facing runaway and homeless youth. The bills specify that the HHS is to conduct a national homeless youth awareness campaign, either directly or by contract, and limits how funds for the campaign may be used. (The bills differ slightly in specifying how funds may be used.) H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 would direct the Secretary to conduct audits and reviews of the costs of the campaign, pursuant to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 254d) and to determine if the costs are allowable under this law. The bills would further require the HHS Secretary to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, and to report to Congress a summary of the campaign that describes its activities. The bills vary in the level of funding that would be authorized for the campaign: H.R. 5524 proposes \$3 million each year for FY2009 through FY2013, and S. 2982 proposes \$3 million for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for the other four years.

## Issues

### Funding

While funding has increased overall for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, from \$103.0 million in FY2001 to \$113.3 million in FY2008, individual grantees have reported not receiving additional funds over this period. The Government Accountability Office described in its report on disconnected youth that funding has remained stagnant for federal youth programs, including those funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. The report states: “While overall Transitional Living Program funding increased in FY2002 to support a greater number of programs, the amount available to individual local programs — capped at \$200,000 — has not changed since 1992. One [runaway and homeless] program director explained that considering increases in the cost of operation, this amount funds only part of one staff rather than three as in previous years.”<sup>19</sup> At the April 29, 2008, hearing conducted by the Senate Judiciary Committee on runaway and homeless youth issues, providers and advocates voiced this same concern. A provider in Vermont explained that his RHYA-funded programs have been level-funded since 1994, while costs have risen significantly.<sup>20</sup>

An analysis of per grantee award amounts from FY2004 through FY2007 indicates that BCP and TLP funding has remained stable or has declined slightly.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Disconnected Youth: Federal Action Could Address Some of the Challenges Faced by Local Programs That Reconnect Youth to Education and Employment*, GAO-08-313, February 2008, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *Living on the Street: Finding Solutions to Protect Runaway and Homeless Youth*. 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, April 29, 2008. Written testimony is available at [<http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=3312>].

<sup>21</sup> Based on a Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of appropriation information and the reported number of grantees, as provided in the U.S. Department of Health and  
(continued...)

For example, \$44.4 million in BCP funds was awarded to 345 grantees for FY2004, resulting in an average grant of \$128,734. For FY2007, approximately \$43.3 million was awarded to 336 grantees, with an average grant amount of about \$128,821. Average TLP award amounts declined over the period from FY2004 through FY2007. For FY2004, 194 grantees shared \$36,744,000 in TLP funds, resulting in an average grant of \$189,402. The average grant award decreased to \$181,558 for FY2007, when 190 grantees shared \$34,496,000 in TLP funds.

## Youth Outcomes

Little is known about the outcomes of youth after they exit programs for runaway and homeless youth. Local grantee organizations have limited information about youth after they leave care, and research on whether youth experience homelessness as adults is dated. Some grantees may decide to follow up with youth who received services, but HHS does not require short-term longitudinal data collection. HHS's 2007 report to Congress, *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness*, states that longer-term studies of runaway and homeless youth are challenging because of the youth's transient nature.<sup>22</sup> Further, knowledge about effective strategies for serving these youth is limited<sup>23</sup> and few, if any, studies appear to have been conducted to determine the costs and benefits of these interventions. Studies of intervention programs have not been based on rigorous design, primarily due to ethical concerns in assigning homeless youth (or youth at risk of becoming homeless) to a control group. According to the Promising Strategies report, creating studies that compare groups of homeless youth is complicated by the diversity in the population and the tendency for these youth to experience episodic periods of homelessness. (Conducting such an evaluation may also be financially prohibitive.)

**Evaluation of TLP Sites.** In response to the need for longer-term evaluations, HHS approved a sub-contract to Abt Associates in August 2007 to conduct an evaluation of the Transitional Living Program at select grantee sites.<sup>24</sup> The study seeks to describe the outcomes of youth who participate in the program and to isolate and describe factors that may have contributed to their successes or challenges, including service delivery approaches, personal characteristics, and local

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<sup>21</sup> (...continued)

Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees, FY2006 through FY2009*.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness, Report to Congress, 2007*. Available at [[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/reporttocongress\\_youthhomelessness.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/reporttocongress_youthhomelessness.pdf)]. This report was required under P.L. 108-96. See 42 U.S.C. 5701.

<sup>23</sup> Interventions can include case management, working with the youth's family, and social skills training, among other areas. For a review of research on intervention and prevention of homeless and runaway situations, see Paul A. Toro, Amy Dworsky, and Patrick J. Fowler, *Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches*, 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, March 2007. Available at [<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/index.htm>].

<sup>24</sup> Based on correspondence with the Department Health and Human Services on March 28, 2008.

circumstances. The Family and Youth Services Bureau and Abt researchers have conducted three site visits to TLP grantees (in Dallas, Texas; Portland, Oregon; and Wichita, Kansas) and a series of consultations with HHS and outside experts to inform the design of the study.

FYSB has not yet selected the TLP survey sites; however, the sites will likely have extensive experience working with runaway and homeless youth and have continuous TLP funding for at least three years after the survey commences. These sites will work to ensure that after receiving training, staff will be sufficiently capable of administering the survey instruments. The sites will also need to be large enough to capture an adequate sample size.

Youth participants will complete surveys at entry and while receiving services through a survey administered by their TLP programs. They will also complete surveys after leaving the program for up to one year. Youth will self-report the data to a website six months and twelve months after exiting. Evaluators will compare the individual outcomes of each youth to his or her benchmark data. The youth surveys are pending executive branch review, and FYSB expects to begin collecting the data in late calendar year 2008. Data collection will be completed after the final group of youth are out of the program for at least one year. FYSB anticipates making preliminary information available before the last surveys are completed. Further, FYSB expects to maintain the self-reporting website indefinitely as a means of tracking TLP graduates after the formal study is complete.

HHS plans to issue a proposed information collection request for public comment about the evaluation in the *Federal Register* by fall of 2008.<sup>25</sup>

**Revisions to PART Outcome Measures.** In response to an assessment by the PART, HHS has also revised its four annual PART performance measures, described above, for the program to better capture youth outcomes.

## Changing Personnel Needs

A review of testimony from the 2003 reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act before the House Education and Labor Committee indicated that the witnesses were generally satisfied with the services of the program and the mission of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.<sup>26</sup> Witnesses said that the program had also been successful in serving youth of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, witnesses raised concerns about the changing personnel needs within grantee organizations. They indicated that grantees needed financial support to attract and retain professional staff who are bilingual. They reported that bilingual staff who helped youth and their families obtain needed services through the program were often hired away to positions in schools and social service agencies that pay higher salaries.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, June 5, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Education and the Workforce. Subcommittee on Select Education. *Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Youth; Strengthening the System*. Hearings. 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, April 29, 2003. Washington: GPO, 2003.

During CRS site visits conducted at grantee organizations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area in November 2006, grantees said that staff are needed for a large number of less common languages in addition to the more ubiquitous Spanish. For example, a growing number of Pakistani youth are using services provided by Northern Virginia's only Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantee. Although many of these youth are fluent in English, their parents and extended families rely primarily on Urdu and other languages to communicate.

## **Runaway and Homeless Youth as “Disconnected Youth”**

The concept of “disconnected youth” has recently gained currency among federal policymakers and youth advocates who have raised concerns about the negative outcomes these individuals face in adulthood. On June 19, 2007, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support held a hearing on disconnected and disadvantaged youth, with a focus on runaway youth.<sup>27</sup> Witnesses described that “disconnected youth” refer to those youth who have weak social networks of family, friends, and communities that provide assistance such as employment connections, health insurance coverage, housing, tuition and other financial assistance, and emotional support. They also discussed measurable characteristics to indicate that vulnerable youth groups are disconnected, such as the lack of high school or college attendance coupled with not having a job over a specific period of time (e.g., one year).<sup>28</sup>

Some runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to becoming disconnected because of separation from their families, absence from school, and non-participation in the economy.<sup>29</sup> Family conflict — rooted in abuse and neglect, school problems, and drug and alcohol abuse — can compel youth to leave home. Family disconnectedness is also evident among many runaway and homeless youth involved in the foster care system. These youth are brought to the attention of child welfare services because of incidents of abuse and neglect. Further, youth “aging out” of the foster care system experience homelessness at a greater rate than their counterparts in the general population due, in part, to family disconnectedness. Some gay and lesbian youth also experience family disassociation when they come out about their sexuality.

Some runaway and homeless youth spend time out of school while they are away from a permanent home. The FY2007 NEO-RHYMIS survey indicated that about 20% of youth were not attending school regularly before entering the Basic

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<sup>27</sup> The written testimony from the hearing is available at [<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=569>].

<sup>28</sup> For additional information about disconnected and other vulnerable youth, see CRS Report RL33975, *Vulnerable Youth: Background and Policies*, by Adrienne L. Fernandes.

<sup>29</sup> Bob Reeg, “The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth,” in Jodie Levin-Epstein and Mark H. Greenburg, eds., *Leave No Youth Behind: Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth* (July 2003), pp. 56-63.



Center Program.<sup>30</sup> Of youth in the Transitional Living Program, 21% had dropped out of school. Some homeless youth face barriers to attending school because of transportation problems and the absence of parents and guardians who can provide records and permission for youth to participate in school activities. Finally, some runaway and homeless youth are removed from the formal economy and resort to illegal activity, including stealing and selling drugs in exchange for cash. Other such youth are too young to work legally or experience mental health and other challenges that make working difficult.

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<sup>30</sup> These figures were derived from the report, “Grade Completed at Exit.” See [<https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/>].

## Appendix

**Table A-1: Comparison of Current Law (and Regulations, if Applicable) with H.R. 5524 and S. 2982**

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
<b>Sec. 1. Short Title</b>				
	Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.		Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008.	(Sec. 1) Runaway and Homeless Youth Protection Act.
<b>Sec. 2. Findings</b>				
Finding About Positive Youth Development  Would amend Sec. 302 (42 U.S.C. 5701)	No provision.		Adds as a purpose that services for runaway and homeless youth should be developed and provided using a positive youth development approach that ensures a young person a sense of (a) safety and structure; (b) belonging and membership; (c) self-worth and social contribution; (d) independence and control over one's life; and (e) closeness in interpersonal relationships.	(Sec. 2) Same as H.R. 5524.
<b>Sec. 3. Grants for Centers and Services</b>				
Youth's Length of Stay  Would amend Sec. 311(a) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision related to length of stay. However, the law specifies that services provided by BCP projects include "safe and appropriate shelter."	1351.1(a) "Temporary shelter" under the Basic Center Program is defined as "the provision of short term (maximum of 15 days) room and board and core crisis intervention services, on a 24-hour basis, by a runaway and homeless youth project."	Safe and appropriate shelter not to exceed 15 days, or not to exceed 21 days, if the center is "located in a state or locality with an applicable law or regulation that permits a length of stay in excess of 15 days in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities."	(Sec. 3) Safe and appropriate shelter not to exceed 21 days.

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
Grants for States and Territories  Would amend Sec. 311(b) of (42 U.S.C. 5711)	An annual minimum of \$100,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$45,000 for each territory.		To the extent that sufficient funds are available, and subject to the provision about funding for FY2009 and FY2010, an annual minimum of \$150,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$70,000 for each territory.	(Sec. 3) An annual minimum of \$200,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$70,000 for each territory.
Minimum Funding for FY2009 and FY2010  Would amend Sec. 311(b) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision.		Funding for each state in FY2009 and FY2010 is to be no less than the amount allotted to that state for FY2008.	No provision.
Reallocation of Unused Funds  Would amend Sec. 311(b) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision.		The Secretary shall reallocate any funds from one state to other states that will not be obligated before the end of a fiscal year.	(Sec. 3) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.
<b>Sec. 4. Basic Center Grant Program Eligibility</b>				
Adequate Emergency Preparedness and Management Plan  Would amend Sec. 312(b) (42 U.S.C. 5712(b))	No provision.		Projects must develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.	(Sec. 3) Same as H.R. 5524.
<b>Sec. 5. Transitional Living Grant Program Eligibility</b>				
Provision of Shelter, Services, and Other Assistance  Would amend Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	To qualify for funding, applicants must agree in their plan submitted to the Secretary that they will provide, <i>directly or indirectly, shelter and services</i> related to basic life skills and other services.		Applicants must specify in their plans that they will provide, <i>directly or by contract, shelter and to provide, directly or indirectly, services</i> related to basic life skills and other services.	(Sec. 4) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
Youth's Length of Stay in Program  Would amend Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	Not to exceed a continuous period of 540 days, except that youth under age 18 may remain in the program until their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday or the 180 <sup>th</sup> day after the end of the 540-day period, whichever comes first.		Adds that youth may remain in the program for a continuous period of up to 635 days if they are in a project "located in a state that has an applicable state or local law or regulation that permits a length of stay in excess of the 540-day period in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities."	(Sec. 4) Not to exceed a continuous period of 635 days, except that youth under age 18 may remain in the program until their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday or the 180 <sup>th</sup> day after the end of the 635-day period, whichever comes first.
Emergency Preparedness and Management Plan  Would amend Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	No provision.		Transitional Living Program projects must develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.	(Sec. 4) Same as H.R. 5524.
<b>Sec. 6. Research, Evaluation, Demonstration, and Service Projects</b>				
Selection of Grantees  Would amend Sec. 343(b) (42 U.S.C. 5714-23)	The Secretary is to give special consideration to proposed projects relating to research, evaluations, and demonstrations in nine priority areas, including (1) youth who repeatedly leave and remain away from their homes; (2) transportation related to services provided under RHYA; (3) runaway and homeless youth in rural areas; (4) programs that place runaway and homeless youth with host families; (5) staff training in sexual assault and victimization; (6) innovative methods of developing		The Secretary is to give priority to projects focused on the nine priority areas in current law (with some modifications to the descriptions of the projects listed under paragraphs (8) and (9) in current law) as well an additional project under a new paragraph (10): (8) increasing access to quality health care (including behavioral health care) for youth; (9) increasing access to education for runaway and homeless youth, including access to educational and workforce programs to achieve outcomes such as decreasing high school dropout rates, increasing rates of attaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent,	(Sec. 5) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

<b>Bill Provision<sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)</b>	<b>Current Law</b>	<b>Current Regulation (where applicable)</b>	<b>H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)</b>	<b>S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)</b>
	resources that enhance runaway and homeless youth centers; (7) training for staff and youth about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); (8) increasing access to health care (including mental health care) for youth; and (9) increasing access to education for runaway and homeless youth.		or increasing placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced workforce training programs; and (10) providing programs, which shall include innovative programs, that assist youth in obtaining and maintaining safe and stable housing, and which may include programs with supportive services that continue after the youth complete the remainder of the programs.	
Priority Selection of Grantees  Would amend Sec. 343(c)	The Secretary is to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth.		Adds that the Secretary is to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth and ensure that applicants selected represent diverse geographic regions of the U.S. and carry out projects that serve diverse youth.	(Sec. 5) Same as H.R. 5524, except that the applicants must have experience working with runaway and homeless youth <i>in high-quality programs.</i>

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
<p><b>Sec. 7. Estimate of Incidence and Prevalence of Youth Homelessness</b>  <i>Adds a new Section 345 under Part D (42 U.S.C. 5714-21-5714-24)</i></p>				
<p>Periodic Estimate of Incidence and Prevalence of Youth Homelessness</p> <p>Would add a new subsection Sec. 345(a)</p>	<p>The Senate Appropriations Committee requested, through S.Rept. 107-84 (to accompany S. 1536), that HHS submit a report to Congress that discusses a plan for developing estimates of the incidences of runaway, throwaway, homeless, and street experiences among youth, as well as a plan for regularly monitoring incidence trends. This report was submitted in 2003.</p>		<p>Not later than two years after this provision becomes effective, and at subsequent five-year intervals, the Secretary, in coordination with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, shall prepare a written report for the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee that contains an estimate, obtained using the best quantitative and qualitative social science research methods available, of the incidence and prevalence of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26, and includes an assessment of the characteristics of these youth.</p>	<p>(Sec. 6)            Same as H.R. 5524, except that the Secretary is not directed to consult with U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Also, the text contains a few minor, non-substantive differences.</p>
<p>Content of Incidence and Prevalence Assessment</p> <p>Would add a new subsection Sec. 345(b)</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>Each assessment must contain the results of a survey of and direct interviews with, a representative sample of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26 to determine past and current (a) socioeconomic characteristics; (b) barriers to obtaining safe, quality, and affordable housing; comprehensive and affordable health insurance and health services; and incomes, public benefits, supportive services, and connections to caring adults; and (c) other information that the Secretary determines may be useful, in consultation with states, local units of</p>	<p>(Sec. 6)            Same as H.R. 5524.</p>

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
			government, and national non-governmental organizations concerned with homelessness.	
<p>Implementation of Assessment</p> <p>Would add a new subsection (Sec. 345(c))</p>	No provision.		If the Secretary enters into any agreement with a non-federal entity to carry out the assessment, such entity shall be a non-governmental organization, or an individual, determined by the Secretary to have appropriate expertise in quantitative and qualitative social science research.	(Sec. 6) Same as H.R. 5524.
<b>Sec. 8. Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (Note: also known as the Street Outreach Program)</b>				
<p>Priorities in Selecting Applicants</p> <p>Would amend Sec. 351(b) (42 U.S.C. 5714-41(b))</p>	In selecting applicants to receive grants, the Secretary shall give priority to non-profit private agencies that have experience in providing services to runaway, homeless, and street youth.		Same as current law, except that the Secretary shall also give priority to public agencies that have experience in providing services to runaway, homeless, and street youth.	(Sec. 7) Same as H.R. 5524.
<b>Sec. 9. National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign</b> <i>Would redesignate current Part F as Part G and add a new Sec. 361 under new Part F</i>				
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 361(a)</p>	No provision.		The Secretary shall, directly or through grants or contracts, conduct a national homeless youth awareness campaign for the purposes of (a) increasing awareness among individuals of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations about the issues facing runaway and homeless youth, the resources available for these youth, and the tools available for the	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, except that the first purpose does not reference resources available for runaway and homeless youth and the prevention tools that are available. Also, the text contains some non-substantive differences.

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Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
			prevention of youth runaway and homeless situations; and (b) encouraging parents, guardians, educators, health care professionals, social service professionals, law enforcement officials, and other community members to assist youth in averting or resolving runaway and homeless situations.	
<p>Use of Funds</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 361(b)</p>	No provision.		Funds made available for the campaign may be used only for the following: (a) dissemination of educational information and materials through various media, including television, radio, the Internet, and related technologies; (b) partnerships with national and other organizations concerned with homelessness; (c) in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, development and placement in media of public service announcements that educate the public on the issues facing runaway and homeless youth and the opportunities adults have to assist these youth; and (d) evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign.	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, except funds can also be used to conduct outreach activities to stakeholders and potential stakeholders in the national awareness campaign. Also, in contrast to H.R. 5524, S. 2982 specifies that funds may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities described under this subsection.
<p>Prohibitions on Use of Funds</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 361(c)</p>	No provision.		Prohibits the use of funds for the national awareness campaign: (a) to supplant pro bono service time donated by national or local broadcasting networks, advertising agencies, or production companies for the campaign, or other pro bono work for the campaign; (b) for partisan	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, except (under (c) in the H.R. 5524 column) that the bill specifies Section 213.3301 or 213.3302 of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar



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Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
			political purposes, or to express advocacy in support of or opposition to any clearly identified candidate, ballot initiative or regulatory proposal; (c) to fund advertising that features any elected official, person seeking office, cabinet level official, or other federal employee employed pursuant to Section 213 of Section C of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as amended; (d) to fund advertising that does not contain a primary message intended to educate the public on the issues facing runaway and homeless youth (or youth considering running away) or the opportunities for adults to help such youth; and (e) to fund advertising that solicits contributions from both public and private sources to support the national awareness campaign.	regulation or ruling).
Financial and Performance Accountability  Would add a new subsection 361(d)	No provision.		The Secretary is to conduct (a) audits and reviews of costs of the national awareness campaign pursuant to Section 304C of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 254d); and (b) an audit to determine whether the costs of the national awareness campaign are allowable under Section 306 of that act (41 U.S.C. 256).	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524
Report to Congress  Would add a new Section 361(e)	No provision relating to a report on a national awareness campaign. However, current law (Sec. 382(a)) requires the		The Secretary is to include in the report to Congress (as currently required under law) — a summary of the national awareness campaign that	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, except that (under (a) in the H.R. 5524 column) the report would

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Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
42 U.S.C. 5714-5701 et seq.)	Secretary to submit a report to Congress biennially on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive grants under RHYA.		describes (a) the activities undertaken by the campaign; (b) steps to ensure that the campaign operates in an effective and efficient manner consistent with the overall strategy and focus of the campaign; and (c) each grant entered into with a corporation, partnership, or individual working on the campaign.	describe the strategy of the national awareness campaign and whether specific objectives of the campaign were accomplished.
<b>Sec. 10. Definitions</b>				
Definition of “Homeless Youth” (for the Basic Center Program only)  Would amend Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)	“Homeless youth” is defined as an individual who is not more than 18 years old; for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.		Would amend the first clause of the current definition to include an individual who is less than 18 years old, or an older maximum age if the BCP center is located in a state or locality with a law or regulation that permits a higher age in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities.	No provision.
Definition of “Homeless Youth” (for the Transitional Living Program only)  Would amend Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)	“Homeless youth” is defined as an individual between the ages of 16 and 21; for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.		Would amend the first clause of the current definition to include an individual between the ages of 16 and 22 or an age exceeding 22 years old upon exiting the TLP project (as permitted under Sec. 322(a)) so long as the participant entered the TLP project prior to reaching age 22.	(Sec. 12) Would amend the first clause of the current definition to include an individual between the ages of 16 and 22, and specify that nothing in this clause is to prevent a participant who enters a TLP project prior to reaching age 22 from being eligible for the 635-day length of stay (as proposed under Sec. 4 of the bill).

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
Definition of “Runaway Youth” (for the Transitional Living Program only)  Would amend Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)		“Runaway youth” is defined as a person under age 18 who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her <i>family</i> .	No provision.	(Sec. 12) Same as regulation, except that the individual absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of a <i>parent or legal guardian</i> .
<b>Sec. 11. Authorization of Appropriations</b>				
RHYA (other than Parts E and F, and Sec. 345)  Would amend Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	\$105 million for FY2004 and “such sums as may be necessary” for FY2005 through FY2008.		\$150 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013.	(Sec. 13) Same as H.R. 5524.
Part E (Street Outreach Program)  Would amend Section 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	“Such sums as may be necessary” for FY2004 through FY2008.		\$30 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013.	(Sec. 13) Same as H.R. 5524.
Part F (National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign)  Would amend Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	No provision.		\$3 million for each of FY2009 through FY2013.	(Sec. 13) \$3 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for FY2010 through FY2013.
Part C (National Communications System) and Part D (Coordinating, Training, Research, and Other Activities)  Would amend Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751 (a))	In each fiscal year, after reserving the amounts required for Parts A and B (BCP and TLP, respectively), the Secretary shall use the remaining amount (if any) to carry out Parts C and D.		No provision.	(Sec. 13) Conforming amendment to exclude Sec. 345 from receiving funding that is allocated for Part C or Part D.

Bill Provision <sup>a</sup> and Proposed Amendments to RHYA (and U.S. Code)	Current Law	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982 (as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee May 22, 2008)
<p>Sec. 345 (Periodic Estimate Assessment)</p> <p>Would amend Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>“Such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2009 through FY2013.</p>	<p>(Sec. 13) Same as H.R. 5524, with minor differences in the text.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 12. Performance Standards</b> <i>Would add a new Sec. 390, per H.R. 5524, and a new Sec. 386A, per S. 2982, under redesignated Part G</i></p>				
<p>Establishment of Performance Standards</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 390(a) under H.R. 5524 and a new subsection 386A(a) under S. 2982</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>Not later than one year after this section becomes effective, the Secretary shall issue rules that specify performance standards for public and non-profit entities that receive BCP, TLP, and SOP grants.</p>	<p>(Sec. 10) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.</p>
<p>Implementation of Performance Standards</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 390(b) under H.R. 5524 and a new subsection 386A(c) under S. 2982</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>The Secretary shall integrate the performance standards into the grantmaking, monitoring, and evaluations processes for the BCP, TLP, and SOP.</p>	<p>(Sec. 10) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.</p>
<p>Consultation</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 390(c) under H.R. 5524 and a new subsection 386A(b) under S. 2982</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>In developing performance standards, the Secretary shall consult with representatives of public and nonprofit private entities that receive grants under RHYA, including statewide and regional nonprofit organizations (including combinations of such organizations), and national nonprofit organizations concerned with youth homelessness.</p>	<p>(Sec. 10) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.</p>

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<p>Public Comment</p> <p>Would add a new subsection 390(d) under H.R. 5524</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>Before issuing rules to establish performance standards, the Secretary is to provide an opportunity for public comment concerning the standards and maintain an official record of such comment.</p>	<p>(Sec. 10) No provision.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 12. GAO Study and Report</b>  <i>H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 do not specify the section of RHYA in which this language would be inserted</i></p>				
<p>Study</p>	<p>No provision.</p>		<p>The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is to conduct a study, and make findings and recommendations, relating to the process for awarding grants under Parts A, B, and E of RHYA, including (a) the Secretary’s written responses to (and any other methods for communicating with) applicants that do not receive a grant under Part A, B, or E, to determine if the information in the response is conveyed clearly; (b) the structure of the grant application and associated documents (including announcements that grants are available under such parts), to determine if these materials are structured so that the applicant has a clear understanding of what is required in each provision to successfully complete the application, including a clear explanation of terminology required to be used by the applicant; (c) the peer review process (if any) used to review the grants (including the selection of peer</p>	<p>(Sec. 11) Same as H.R. 5524.</p>

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			reviewers) and the oversight of the peer review process by HHS employees, as well as to the extent to which these employees make funding determinations based on the comments and scores of the peer reviewers; (d) the typical timeframe and process used by HHS employees, including employee responsibilities, for responding to applicants and the efforts made by HHS staff to communicate with applicants when funding decisions are delayed or not appropriated before the beginning of the current fiscal year; and (e) the plans for, and implementation of, where applicable, RHYA-authorized technical assistance and training programs, and the effect of such programs on the grant application process.	
Report	No provision.		GAO is to prepare and submit a report to Congress on its findings and recommendations no later than a year after the bill is enacted.	(Sec. 11) Same as H.R. 5524.

**Source:** Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service.

**Notes:** S. 2982 includes a section on conforming amendments (Sec. 9). Sec. 9 of S. 2982 would amend Sec. 382(a) to reference Part F (national homeless youth awareness campaign). Section 382(a) pertains to the biennial report to Congress on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive grants under Parts A, B, C, D, and E of RHYA. Further, Sec. 9 of S. 2982 would also amend Sec. 386(a) to reference Part F. Sec. 386(a) pertains to evaluations of grantees that receive grants for three consecutive years under Parts A, B, C, D, or E.

a. The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524