



James Turner

PAYING IT FORWARD **James Turner Assumes Role** **As CORE Board President**

In anticipation of his imminent retirement, Tom Robinson stepped down from his role as president of the CORE board of directors on May 22, 2024, after serving almost a three-year term in that capacity. He previously made the board aware of his plans to retire at the January 17th board meeting. At that meeting, the board voted that James Turner would be Tom's successor as president.

Gratefully, James like Tom, is extremely skilled, professional and knowledgeable of best practice when it comes to working with children and families from hard places.

I frankly doubt that music by Johnny Cash resonates with James Turner, the new CORE Board President. However, Cash's song that includes these lyrics seem to fit:

*I've been everywhere, man
I've been everywhere, man
Crossed the deserts bare, man
I've breathed the mountain air, man
Of travel I've had my share, man
I've been everywhere*

James Turner knows first-hand the difference people with a passion for serving others can make in the life of a child. James never met either of his biological parents and got his start in life as a newborn placed in foster care.

In that environment, he fondly remembers the support and encouragement he regularly received from his social workers. They were the individuals who went out of their way to make him feel special on his birthdays and holidays. They were the people who passed on the hope that tomorrow doesn't have to look like yesterday. They encouraged him not to give-up on his dream of having a family of his own. He deserved one.

In his first twelve years of life, James lived without a sense of belonging or permanent connections. He learned to navigate change as though it was a natural occurrence that children developmentally had to experience. The longing of his heart was to have a real family; not one that changed on the average of once a year. He says figuratively of his foster care years, "I've been everywhere, man."

Sometime ago, I asked James if he had siblings. He responded, "I have a sister." He went on to explain that his sister was not biologically related, but another child in his last foster home. Both wanted so desperately to have family, that they referred to each other as their sibling. James last saw her when he was twelve years old.

After he was placed in adoption, he had no way to maintain contact, but the memory of having a sister has not been forgotten. People need people and people need family.

James responded to my question: "In looking back, what stands out as most satisfying and memorable?" He responded: "In the chambers of Judge Bruce Wright in New York City. It was better than Christmas. He asked me if I wanted the Turners to adopt me. I was overwhelmed because I couldn't believe the day had come."

James' goal is to play it forward and be a source of hope and encouragement to children longing for a sense of belonging, achievement and the sense that they really matter.

James serves as a Home Life Administrator at Milton Hershey School. Every role he has fulfilled in the residential education system has been an important role:

He served as Interim President at Girard College – Philadelphia, PA
Vice-President of Student Life at Girard College – Philadelphia, PA
Director of Student and Family Affairs at Boys Prep School – Bronx, NY
Dean of Students at Classical Charter School – Bronx, NY
Director of Student Life at SEED School of Maryland – Baltimore, MD
Head of School at George Jackson Academy – New York City, NY
Director of Student Life – Girard College – Philadelphia, PA

James has truly been "everywhere" and has made a meaningful difference in every school where he has worked. We are grateful for James' professionalism, experience and sense of longing to make a difference in the life of a child.

Register Now for 2024 CORE National Conference

<http://core-dc.org>

October 6-9, 2024

United States Senate Committee on Finance

The Family First Prevention Services Act: Successes, Roadblocks, and Opportunities for Improvement Hearing was held on May 22, 2024 -

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT INCLUDED:

Chairman Wyden (D) from Oregon and Ranking Member Crapo (R) from Idaho. Democrats present were Cardin (D-MD), Bennet (D-CO), Warner (D-VA), Hassan (D-NH) and Cortez Masto (D-NV). That's 6 of 14 D Members. The Republicans were Grassley (R-IA), Lankford (R-OK), Barrasso (R-WY) or 4 of 13.

THIS LINK WILL TAKE YOU TO MEMBER STATEMENTS AND TESTIMONY:

<https://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/the-family-first-prevention-services-act-successes-roadblocks-and-opportunities-for-improvement>

Invited Testimony included:

- The Honorable Rebecca Jones Gaston-Commissioner For Administration On Children, Youth, And Families At The Administration For Children And Families, United States Department of Health and Human Services, Washington , DC
- David Reed-Deputy Director Of Child Welfare Services, Indiana Department of Child Services, Indianapolis , IN
- JooYeun Chang, Program Director For Child Wellbeing, Doris Duke Foundation, New York , NY
- Laurie Tapozada, Kinship Caregiver, Peer Mentor, And Kinship Navigator Professional, Cranston , RI

Legislative Update

H.R. 3852 – Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act

The Act was introduced by Rep. Neal Dunn [R- FL]. The bill currently has 17 cosponsors:

13 from Florida, 3 from Mississippi and 1 from Texas. The last cosponsor, Rep. Cory Mills from Florida signed on as a cosponsor on Feb. 28, 2024.

This legislation is supported by the Coalition of Residential Excellence. It would place children's homes back into the continuum of care for which IV-E funds could be used to cover the cost of care. Many of our member agencies are willing to serve as a resource for children in harm's way without cost, but programs are not being utilized because of the perception that what we have to offer has value. Until we are added back into the continuum of care, it is doubtful this perception will change.

Please continue to reach out to your legislator to request support for this legislation.

H.R. 2955 – Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act

The Act was introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna [D-CA] on 4/27/23. There are currently 100 cosponsors.

This bill establishes an interagency Federal Work Group on Youth Residential Programs to support and implement best practices regarding the health and safety, care, treatment, and appropriate placement of youth in youth residential programs.

The work group must develop recommendations about a national database to aggregate information about processes and outcomes for youth in such programs. The work group also must support the education and training of professional and paraprofessional personnel in fields that service such youth.

Further, the Department of Health and Human Services must contract with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to study and make recommendations about various aspects of federal and state oversight of youth residential programs.

S.102 – Foster Care Stabilization Act

The Act was introduced by Sen. Deb Fisher on January 26, 2023. There is one Cosponsor.

S.1351 – Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act

The Act was introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley [D-OR] on 4/27/23. Two additional cosponsors were added on in February 2024: Senator Debbie Stabenow [D-MI] and Senator John Kennedy [R-LA]. There are currently 23 cosponsors.

H.R. 755 – Protecting Sibling Relationships in Foster Care Act

The Act was introduced by Rep. Don Bacon on 2/02/23. There are 8 cosponsors. This bill requires the Administration for Children and Families to establish a competitive pilot grant program for foster care agencies to increase the placement of siblings together in foster care.

H.R. 756 – Foster Care Stabilization Act

The Act was introduced by Rep. Bacon on 2/02/23. There are 8 cosponsors. The last cosponsor was added on August 1, 2024 S.102 – Foster Care Stabilization Act The Act was introduced by Sen. Deb Fisher on January 26, 2023. There is one Cosponsor.