

Event focuses on foster care in East Texas

BY LEEZA MEYER
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TYLER – U.S. Rep. Nathaniel Moran welcomed local professionals and stakeholders on Friday in Tyler to discuss the state of foster care in East Texas.

The group provided input about needed federal policy changes and pathways for aging out foster youth and reviewed the Fostering the Future Act, which was passed by the House in May and awaits consideration in the Senate.

The bill would reform the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood, an initiative that supports foster youth ages 14 to 21. The bill would expand the Chafee Education and Training Vouchers cap from \$5,000 per year for postsecondary education to \$12,000 while maintaining current funding levels. It also would increase access to legal services, short-term workforce training programs, federal housing programs and connect parents to Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting services.

The bill fine-tunes the Chafee program for the first time since its creation in 1999, said Moran, R-Tyler.

“We can increase the (education and training Vouchers cap) right

U.S. Rep. Nathaniel Moran, at right, speaks Friday in Tyler during a roundtable discussion about foster care in East Texas. (Leeza Meyer/Tyler Morning Telegraph Photo)

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‘LOVE STILL EXISTS’

Dozens attend boy’s Longview birthday party after mother’s social media plea



Diesel Reagh picks up a gift Saturday during his 7th birthday party at the Alpine Event Center in Longview. (Jordan Green/Longview News-Journal Photo)



Annie Starr watches Clayton Starr on Saturday during Diesel Reagh’s 7th birthday party at the Alpine Event Center in Longview. (Jordan Green/Longview News-Journal Photo)

BY JORDAN GREEN
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Seven-year-old Diesel Reagh is the one who received all the presents at his birthday party Saturday, but his mother, Jessica, might be the one who received the greatest gift of all.

She finally got to see her son have a birthday party where people showed up.

Diesel, of Diana, has nonverbal autism, a neurological condition that means he doesn’t speak — maybe only a word or two — and otherwise struggles to connect with people. Recently, he started saying “Momma,” and that’s it. Otherwise, he communicates through noises, sign language and his AAC device. That stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The device is a tool that speaks for him when he pushes certain buttons.

It’s no surprise, then, that he struggles to develop friendships with other children. Sometimes, they’re outright bullies. The gulf between Diesel and others is most apparent at the times in life when it should be nonexistent — such as a birthday party.

“We’ve had all his other birthday parties — not one person showed up,” Jessica Reagh said Saturday. “Friends or family did not show up. And it’s heartbreaking.”

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Cruz dismisses Cornyn’s warnings that Paxton is ‘poor campaigner’

BY JOSEPH MORTON
The Dallas Morning News

WASHINGTON — Sen. Ted Cruz on Sunday dismissed fellow Texas Sen. John Cornyn’s increasingly dire warnings about Republican Ken Paxton’s campaign, saying the criticism came from “hurt feelings” over their bitter primary.

Cruz predicted Paxton will defeat Democrat James Talarico in November, even as polls show a close race and Cornyn refuses to use his formidable fundraising network to help his former rival.

“I understand their hurt feelings,” Cruz said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” “That is human nature.”

The race could help determine control of the Senate, where Republicans are defending their majority. Cruz predicted his party would keep control, saying a Democratic-led Congress would bring investigations, subpoenas and “nonstop impeachment circus” targeting President Donald Trump.

Cornyn, who lost the GOP primary runoff to Paxton by nearly 28 percentage points, said last week that Paxton has not built a strong general election campaign.

Cornyn called the Senate race “close” and potentially “disastrous” for Republicans in November.

“Paxton’s a poor campaigner,”

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton campaigns in May in Tyler. (Leeza Meyer/Tyler Morning Telegraph File Photo)

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