

June 1, 2015

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

As representatives of organizations committed to improving the health, safety and wellbeing of our nation's children and families, we are writing to urge your support for the Administration's FY 2016 child welfare budget proposals that seek to strengthen and make targeted investments in services and supports for abused and neglected children, including those in foster care across the country.

These proposals increase investments in evidence-based prevention and post-permanency supports for children at risk of entering foster care, encourage the broader use of family-based care including kinship care rather than congregate care for children and youth, and reduce overprescribing of psychotropic medications for children and youth in foster care, all areas of interest to the Committee. As a community, we share the Administration's vision for improving the child welfare system and firmly believe that investments in such a broad array of services and programs will help us to better serve vulnerable children and families.

Historically federal child welfare dollars have favored foster care over services that support and strengthen families. Recently child welfare waiver demonstration projects have helped states shift resources and efforts away from foster care maintenance and toward prevention, intervention and treatment approaches and highlighted the benefits of such investments. The Administration's Budget builds on lessons from the waivers and reinforces the importance of increased federal support for a range of prevention and early intervention services for children, youth and families who come to the attention of the child welfare system.

Title IV-E waiver authority was an opportunity to test innovation and learn about what works best for meeting the critical needs of children and families who come to the attention of the child welfare system. However, these waivers will end in FY 2019 making it even more urgent that we invest now to sustain a range of prevention and early intervention services for children, youth and families involved in child welfare. Recognizing that waivers were meant to be temporary and informative, we know that greater long-term federal investments are needed to keep children safe and in permanent families.

We urge your support and leadership to ensure passage and adequate funding for the child welfare system improvements outlined in the Administration's FY 2016 budget. We stand ready to work with you to enact the following critical initiatives outlined within the Administration's FY2016 Budget:

- Increase federal investments on the front-end of the child welfare service delivery system to prevent removals and foster care placements for children by allowing title IV-E funds to be used for evidence-based and evidence-informed pre-placement services for candidates for foster care and post-placement services. This includes supports and services for children who have been diverted from the child welfare system and placed with kin.
- Amend title IV-E to promote specialized family-based care as an alternative to congregate care for children with behavioral health needs and provide oversight when congregate placements are used.
- Create a five-year Administration for Children and Families/Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services demonstration to encourage states to implement evidence-based psychosocial interventions to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care suffering from trauma, while reducing the current over-prescription of psychotropic medications for foster children.
- Allow title IV-E agencies to use Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds to serve young people formerly in foster care through the age of 23.
- Provide enhanced capacity building funds for Indian tribes, tribal organizations or consortia that are approved to operate a title IV-E program to assist with implementing the program.

These proposed federal child welfare investments provide an important vehicle for supporting states in efforts to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for child welfare involved children, youth and families, some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Vulnerable children and families need your support. Thank you for your leadership on these critical reforms.

Sincerely,

A New Leaf (AZ)

Adolescent and Family Growth Center, Inc. (VA)

Adoption Rhode Island (RI)

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. (IL)

Advocates for Children and Youth (MD)

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (NJ)

Advokids (CA)

Alabama MENTOR (AL)

Albany County Dept. for Children, Youth and Families (NY)

Aldea (CA)
Alexander County Department of Social Services (NC)
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Psychological Association
Arizona's Children Association (AZ)
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AR)
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA)
Association on American Indian Affairs
Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc.
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Boys' and Girls' Haven (KY)
Cabarrus County DHS (NC)
California Alliance of Child and Family Services (CA)
Camelot Care Centers, Inc. (IL)
CASA/GAL of Eastern Montana (MT)
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (LA)
Cenpatico
Center for Adoption Support and Education
Center for Children Inc (MD)
Centerforce (CA)
Charlotte GAL Volunteers (NC)
Child and Family Policy Center (IA)
Child Welfare League of America
Children Awaiting Parents
Children's Action Alliance (AZ)
Children's Advocacy Alliance (NV)
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Home Society of America
Children's Home Society of North Carolina (NC)
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (WI)
Citizen Review Board (OR)

Citizens' Committee for Children (NY)
Clark County Department of Family Services (NV)
Coconino Coalition for Children and Youth (AZ)
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (CO)
Connecticut Voices for Children (CT)
Consortium for Children
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CA)
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Delaware Center for Justice, Inc. (DE)
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (MD)
Detroit Center for Family Advocacy (MI)
Devereux Arizona (AZ)
Donaldson Adoption Institute
Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care (MI)
Families And Children Together (ME)
Families NOW
Families On The Move, Inc (MI)
Family & Youth Initiative (DC)
Family & Youth Roundtable (CA)
Family Care Network, Inc. (CA)
Family Preservation Community Services
Family Voices-NJ (NJ)
Farmworker Association of Florida (FL)
Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research
First Focus Campaign for Children
Florida's Children First (FL)
Foster Care Alumni of America, WA Chapter (WA)
Foster Care to Success
FosterClub
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Generations United
GrandFamilies of America
Growing Home Southeast, Inc. (SC)

Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services (CA)
Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition (HI)
Healthy Teen Network
Hillsides (CA)
Human Services Consultants (AZ)
Institute for Child Success
International Foster Care Alliance
Juvenile Law Center
Kentucky SAFE TFC (KY)
Kentucky Youth Advocates (KY)
KVC Health Systems
La Familia, Inc. (NM)
Lawyers For Children (NY)
Lilliput Children's Services (CA)
Lutheran Family Services of Virginia (VA)
Lutheran Services in America
Maine Children's Alliance (ME)
Maple Star Colorado
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MA)
Michigan's Children (MI)
Mid-South Health System (AR)
Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association (KS, MO)
Mo. Alliance for Children & Families (MO)
National Association for Children of Alcoholics- NACoA
National Adoption Center
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Crittenton Foundation
National Foster Care Coalition
National Foster Parent Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association

National Kinship Alliance for Children
National Youth Advocate Program, Inc.
Nebraska Appleseed (NE)
Nebraska Children's Home Society (NE)
Neighbor To Family
New Mexico Solutions (NM)
New Mexico Voices for Children (NM)
NJ Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ)
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Northwest Regional Council (WA)
NY Council on Adoptable Children (NY)
NYS Kinship Navigator (NY)
Orangewood Children's Foundation (CA)
Partners for Our Children (WA)
PATH (ID)
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PA)
Pressley Ridge
Public Policy Center of Mississippi (MS)
Robert F. Kennedy Charter School (NM)
San Elizario High School (TX)
SBC Global Consultants
School Social Work Association of America
Schubert Center for Child Studies, CWRU (OH)
Spaulding for Children (MI)
St. Paul Public Schools (MN)
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (NJ)
STOKES DSS (NC)
Sunlight Children's Advocacy & Rights Foundation (KS)
Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families (TN)
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TN)
Texans Care for Children (TX)
The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (IL)
The Children's Guild (MD)

The Children's Partnership
The MENTOR Network
The Phoenix Institute (IN)
The Village Network (OH)
TN Alliance for Children and Families (TN)
Tuolumne County Health Department (CA)
University of California, Los Angeles (CA)
University of Pennsylvania (PA)
Vermont Kin As Parents (VT)
Voice for Adoption
Voices for Children in Nebraska (NE)
Voices for Ohio's Children (OH)
Voices for Ohio's Children (OH)
Voices for Vermont's Children (VT)
Voices for Virginia's Children (VA)
Walker County Department of Family and Children Services (GA)
Wayne State University Transition to Independence Program (MI)
Wilkes DSS (NC)
Youth in Transition (NC)