

September 15, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Begich
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Stivers
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Al Green
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Portman, Senator Begich, Representative Stivers, Representative Miller, and Representative Green,

We are writing on behalf of national, state, and local organizations to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2014 (HR 5186/S. 2653). As organizations committed to securing a bright future for children and youth, we applaud efforts to amend the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s definition of homelessness to include children and youth who are verified as homeless by other federal program personnel, and to restore decision-making to local communities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there were over 1.1 million homeless children and youth enrolled in public school in the 2011-2012 school year. Yet many of these children and youth are not able to access HUD services such as transitional housing and other wraparound services because HUD's current definition of homelessness excludes children, youth, and families who are living in motels or temporarily with others because they have nowhere else to go.

These situations are chaotic, unstable, overcrowded, and often dangerous, resulting in negative emotional and health outcomes for children and youth, as well as putting them at risk of physical and sexual abuse and trafficking. Yet HUD's regulations impose requirements for multiple moves and long periods of homelessness, as well as extensive documentation and recordkeeping requirements before children, youth, and their families are eligible for HUD homeless assistance.

This legislation would amend HUD's definition of homelessness to include children and youth who are verified as homeless by federal program personnel from federal programs such as: school district liaisons designated under the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, Head Start programs, Runaway and Homeless Youth programs, Early Intervention programs, Violence Against Women programs, and Health Care for the Homeless programs. It would create a streamlined and efficient referral process for homeless children and youth to access HUD homeless services, and provide communities with the flexibility to serve and house this vulnerable population. Public housing agencies and directors of HUD homeless assistance programs also would have the flexibility to certify families and unaccompanied youth who live in motels or temporarily with others.

In addition, the Homeless Children and Youth Act would allow – but not require - local service providers to prioritize funding for homeless families and unaccompanied youth based on the needs in their community. This legislation returns control over these decisions to local communities, who know their needs best. Finally, this legislation amends federal homeless data collection and reporting requirements to include all homeless children, youth, and families, providing an accurate and honest accounting of homelessness in America.

The failure of federal policy to allow some homeless children and youth to access homeless assistance has serious and far-reaching effects, including exclusion of these populations from critical services, continued invisibility in

community planning on homelessness, and weak or non-existent coordination with key systems of care for children and youth.

We are grateful for your leadership in making homeless children and youth a legislative priority, and we look forward to working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of America's children and youth.

Sincerely,

National

1. Afterschool Alliance
2. Alliance for Children and Families
3. Alliance for Excellent Education
4. Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking
5. American Association of School Administrators
6. American Federation of Teachers
7. American Psychological Association
8. American School Counselor Association
9. Child Welfare League of America
10. Children's Advocacy Institute
11. Children's Leadership Council
12. Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
13. Covenant House
14. Family Promise
15. First Focus Campaign for Children
16. Food Research and Action Center
17. Foster Club
18. Foster Family-based Treatment Association
19. Healthy Teen Network
20. HEAR US
21. Justice for Families
22. National Association of Council for Children
23. National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
24. National Association of Elementary School Principals
25. National Association of School Psychologists
26. National Association of Secondary School Principals
27. National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.
28. National Education Association
29. National Foster Care Coalition
30. National Head Start Association
31. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
32. National Network to End Domestic Violence
33. National Network for Youth
34. National Parent Teacher Association
35. National Safe Place Network
36. National Title I Association
37. National Youth Advocate Program
38. Opportunity Action
39. Organizations Concerned About Rural Education
40. Ounce of Prevention Fund
41. Rural School and Community Trust
42. Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
43. School Social Work Association of America
44. Youth Villages

Regional

45. Community Technology Alliance
46. Elev8
47. Janus Youth Programs
48. MANY
49. New England Head Start Association
50. Region IX Head Start Association
51. Region X Head Start Association

Alabama

52. Children's Aid Society
53. Morgan County System of Services

Alaska

54. Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
55. Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption
56. Juneau Youth Services

Arizona

57. Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services (Project ALWAYS)
58. Children's Action Alliance
59. Homeless Youth Connection
60. Kiwanis of North Phoenix
61. UMOM New Day Centers
62. United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Arkansas

63. North Little Rock School District
64. Youth Bridge (Northwest Arkansas)

California

65. Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (Oakland)
66. California Coalition for Youth
67. Center for Health Justice (Los Angeles)
68. Charities Housing
69. Children Now
70. City of Sunnyvale
71. CIYMCA - Noah's Anchorage Youth Crisis Shelter (Santa Barbara)
72. Coalition on Homelessness (San Francisco)
73. Community Housing Partnership (San Francisco)
74. Community Human Services of Monterey County
75. Compass Point (San Francisco)
76. East Oakland Community Project
77. Episcopal Sanctuary (San Francisco)
78. Family Assistance Program (Victorville)
79. Fertig, Gold & Leiberman (Santa Monica)
80. Hamilton Family Center (San Francisco)
81. Hayward Community Action Network (Hayward)
82. Homeless Prenatal Program (San Francisco)
83. Home Start (San Diego)
84. Interface Children & Family Services (Camarillo)
85. Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco)
86. Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (San Jose)

87. Los Angeles Community Action Center
88. Merced River Elementary School District (Winton)
89. New Morning Youth & Family Services (Placerville)
90. Project YES (Modesto)
91. Redwood Community Action Agency Youth Service Bureau (Eureka)
92. Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
93. Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness
94. San Diego Youth Services
95. Sanctuary of Hope (Los Angeles)
96. Social Advocates for Youth (Santa Rosa)
97. South County Collaborative (Gilroy)
98. The Village Family Services (North Hollywood)
99. Western Center on Law and Poverty
100. Western Regional Advocacy Project
101. Youth Spirit Artworks (Berkeley)

Colorado

102. Attention Homes (Boulder)
103. Urban Peak Colorado Springs
104. Urban Peak Denver

Connecticut

105. Bethel AME Church (Bridgeport)
106. Council of Churches (Bridgeport)
107. First United Church of Christ (Bridgeport)
108. Generation Joshua Outreach Ministry (Bridgeport)
109. Janus Center for Youth In Crisis (Bridgeport)
110. Joseph's Coat of Many Colors (Bridgeport)
111. Jesse Lee United Methodist Church (Easton)
112. Kids in Crisis (Greenwich)
113. Salem Lutheran Church (Bridgeport)
114. Saugatuck Congregational Church (Westport)
115. St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Fairfield)
116. Unity Hill (Trumbull)

District of Columbia

117. Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.
118. StandUp for Kids

Florida

119. Covenant House (Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando)
120. Family Resources, Inc.
121. Florida Network of Youth and Family Services
122. Hope Community Outreach (Citra)
123. Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team of Palm Beach County (Belle Glade)
124. Interfaith Emergency Services (Ocala)
125. Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County
126. Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. (New Port Richey)

Georgia

127. Fulton County Schools – Program for Children and Youth in Transition
128. Sconiers Homeless Preventive Organization, Inc. (Riverdale)
129. Unheard Voices

130.Young Adult Guidance Center, Inc. (Atlanta)

Illinois

131.Illinois Collaboration on Youth

132.Illinois Head Start Association

133.The Night Ministry (Chicago)

134.Youth Service Bureau (Springfield)

Indiana

135.Crisis Center, Inc., a Youth Service Bureau (Gary)

136.Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County, Inc. (South Bend)

137.Youth Service Bureau (Bloomington)

138.Youth Service Bureau of Monroe County

Iowa

139.Youth and Shelter Services, Inc (Ames)

Kansas

140.Kids'TLC (Olathe)

Kentucky

141.Emerging Workforce Initiative (Louisville)

142.Kentucky Youth Advocates

Louisiana

143.Greater Light Ministries

Maine

144.Home Counselors, Inc. (Rockland)

145.Preble Street

146.Shaw House (Bangor)

Massachusetts

147.Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

148.Massachusetts Head Start Association

Maryland

149.Advocates for Children and Youth

150.Maryland Head Start Association

151.Petercares House

Michigan

152.Common Ground (Bloomfield Hills)

153.Cypress Place (Port Huron)

154.Gateway Community Services (Lansing)

155.Mecosta Osceola Youth Attention Center (Big Rapids)

156.Staircase Youth Services (Ludington)

157.The Connection Youth Services (Howell)

- 158.The Corner Health Center (Ypsilanti)
- 159.The Harbor (Port Huron)

Minnesota

- 160.Avenues for Homeless Youth (Minneapolis)
- 161.Face to Face Health and Counseling Service, Inc (St. Paul)
- 162.Hope 4 Youth (Anoka)
- 163.Integrated Community Solutions, Inc. (Fridley)
- 164.Lutheran Social Service
- 165.Lutheran Social Service – Lakes Area Youth Services (Brainerd)
- 166.Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (St. Paul)
- 167.Minnesota Head Start Association
- 168.Oasis for Youth (Bloomington)
- 169.The Bridge for Youth (Minneapolis)
- 170.The Link (Minneapolis/St. Paul)
- 171.Teens Alone (Hopkins)
- 172.YouthLink (Minneapolis)

Missouri

- 173.Synergy Services (Kansas City)

Nebraska

- 174.Youth Emergency Services (Omaha)

New Hampshire

- 175.Winnacunnet High School (Hampton)
- 176.Child and Family Services of New Hampshire

New Jersey

- 177.Advocates for Children of New Jersey
- 178.Center for Family Services (Camden)

New Mexico

- 179.Las Cruces Public Schools Project Link Homeless Education
- 180.New Mexico Voices for Children

New York

- 181.Ali Forney Center
- 182.brainpower.me (Bronx)
- 183.Catholic Charities of Herkimer County
- 184.Center for Youth (Rochester)
- 185.Citizens Committee for Children of New York
- 186.CMCS Sunrise Drop In Center (Bronx)
- 187.Coalition for Homeless Youth
- 188.Compass House (Buffalo)
- 189.Episcopal Social Services/Safe Space
- 190.Good Shepherd Services
- 191.Hetrick-Martin Institute (New York)
- 192.Metropolitan Community Church of NY Charities
- 193.Sanctuary (Huntington)
- 194.The Center for Youth Services (Rochester)

- 195.The Franciscan Center (Buffalo)
- 196.Youth Bureau of Ulster County

Nevada

- 197.Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth
- 198.Southern Nevada Children First

199.North Carolina

- 200.Only Hope Wnc, Inc. (Hendersonville)

Ohio

- 201.Central Ohio Mental Health Center (Delaware)
- 202.Columbus Literacy Council
- 203.Compass Family and Community Services/Daybreak
- 204.Daybreak (Dayton)
- 205.Easter Seals Northern Ohio (Elyria)
- 206.Help Me Grow (Akron)
- 207.Highland County Help me Grow (Hillsboro)
- 208.House of Hope for Alcoholics, Inc. (Columbus)
- 209.Juvenile Justice Coalition (Bath)
- 210.Lighthouse Youth Services (Cincinnati)
- 211.Mothers Assisting Mothers, Inc. (Akron)
- 212.Non Profit Evolution, Inc. (Columbus)
- 213.Ohio Afterschool Network
- 214.Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association
- 215.Center for Community Solutions
- 216.Voices for Ohio's Children
- 217.Yinovate, LLC (Cleveland)

Oklahoma

- 218.Northwest Family Services, Inc. (Alva)
- 219.Youth Services for Stephens County, Inc.
- 220.Youth Services of Tulsa

Oregon

- 221.Oregon Head Start Association
- 222.Right 2 Survive (Portland)
- 223.Salem-Keizer Public Schools Students in Transition Educational Program
- 224.Sisters of the Road (Portland)
- 225.St. Mary's Center (Alameda)
- 226.Street Roots (Portland)

Pennsylvania

- 227.Homeless Children's Education Fund (Pittsburgh)
- 228.PathWays PA (Holmes)
- 229.People's Emergency Center (Philadelphia)
- 230.Women Against Abuse, Inc. (Philadelphia)

Rhode Island

- 231.Crossroads (Providence)

Texas

- 232.Connections Individual and Family Services
- 233.Families in Crisis, Inc. (Killeen)
- 234.Grayson County Juvenile Alternatives, Inc. (Sherman)
- 235.Harlandale Independent School District (San Antonio)
- 236.Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults – Youth Services Division
- 237.K'STAR, Inc. (Kerrville)
- 238.Montgomery County Homeless Coalition (Conroe)
- 239.Montgomery County Youth Services (Conroe)
- 240.Promise House, Inc. (Dallas)
- 241.Texans Care for Children
- 242.Victoria Area Homeless Coalition
- 243.Victoria Independent School District KIDZ Connection

Utah

- 244.Wasatch Mental Health (Provo)
- 245.Voices for Utah's Children
- 246.Volunteers of America (Salt Lake City)

Vermont

- 247.Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs

Virginia

- 248.Alternative House (Vienna)
- 249.Henrico County Public Schools
- 250.New Vision Youth Services, Inc. (Chesapeake)
- 251.Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

- 252.Children's Alliance
- 253.Friends of Youth (Kirkland)
- 254.Housing Options for Students in Transition (Shelton)
- 255.Northwest Youth Services (Bellingha)
- 256.The Mockingbird Society
- 257.YouthCare (Seattle)

West Virginia

- 258.West Virginia Head Start Association

Wisconsin

- 259.CAP Services' Family Crisis Center
- 260.Kids in Need Youth Program (Rhineland)
- 261.Lutheran Social Services (Baraboo)
- 262.Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.
- 263.Project 16:49 (Beloit)
- 264.Walker's Point Youth and Family Center (Milwaukee)
- 265.WI Association for Runaway Services
- 266.WI Council on Children and Families
- 267.Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin

Wyoming

268.Casper Housing Authority (Casper)