

Call Guide: Talking to Your Legislators About the Homeless Children and Youth Act

KEY MESSAGES:

- The Homeless Children and Youth Act is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that removes barriers to HUD homelessness assistance for children, youth, and families
- It is bipartisan in both the House and Senate and supported by over 60 national organizations, as well as 100s from around the country. Supporters include family homeless providers, runaway and homeless youth service providers, early childhood and K-12 education service providers, child policy advocates, child welfare system providers, and more.
- Child and youth homelessness in the U.S. continues to skyrocket, with 1.3 million homeless students identified by the U.S. Department of Education in the 2016-2017 school year.
- Many of these families are living in rundown motels or must stay with other people temporarily because there is nowhere else to go – These situations are often unstable and unsafe, putting children and youth at high risk of trafficking and violence.
- Yet these homeless children and youth often face barriers to federal homeless assistance services, because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not recognize them as homeless, so they can't even get assessed for homeless assistance.
- The bipartisan Homeless Children and Youth Act (H.R. 1511/S. 611) would allow communities to use funding more flexibly to assess and serve the most vulnerable homeless children, youth and families identified in their area.
- This bill would also allow communities to provide assistance tailored to the unique needs of each homeless population in their community, including models most appropriate and effective for youth and families.
- Finally, it would allow communities to form a more complete picture of homelessness among all who experience it by increasing data visibility.



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- The Homeless Children and Youth Act recognizes homelessness looks different in different communities and we need a homeless assistance system that works for children, youth and families in all communities.

SAMPLE CALL DIALOGUE:

Caller: Good morning/afternoon! Can you let me know if Congressman/Senator _____ has a position on the Homeless Children and Youth Act (H.R. 1511/S. 611)?

OPTION 1: IF THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS OPPOSES THE HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT

Caller: I am very disappointed to hear that. This bill would make our federal homeless assistance system much more effective in connecting the most vulnerable homeless children, youth and families to services. It is for this reason that it has a long history of bipartisan support, and is endorsed by 100s of organizations from around the country that serve homeless children and youth. (Use talking points) Can I send along additional information that details this bill?

OPTION 2: IF THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS SUPPORTS THE HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT

Caller: That's great! Please tell him/her thank you for the support, and I would love to hear him/her speak out about this bill, which would remove barriers to services for some of the most vulnerable homeless children and youth in the U.S.

OPTION 3: IF THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS IS UNDECIDED/UNFAMILIAR WITH THE HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT

Caller: I am disappointed to hear that and ask that he/she look into this legislation (H.R. 1511 or S. 611) and please strongly consider supporting. (Use key messages)