

May 15, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of nearly 300 national, state, and local undersigned organizations, we are writing to thank Congress for enacting the *Family First Prevention Services Act* as part of the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018*. This landmark bipartisan legislation will strengthen families so more children can remain safely with their parents and kinship caregivers and avoid unnecessary placements in foster care. Children fare best in families, and this newly enacted law represents an historic step toward better aligning federal child welfare policy with this goal. We represent advocates for children, youth, and families, medical and public health professionals, public and private providers, foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers, and alumni of foster care, and it is our strong belief that these reforms will improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and families.

In particular, we applaud the provisions of *Family First* that will provide federal investments in evidence-based prevention and early intervention. These policies will allow states to access federal funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, and in-home parenting skills services. Under the law, states will also be able to receive IV-E reimbursement for children who are placed with a parent in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, regardless of income eligibility. These and other provisions in the law will help states working to address the detrimental impact of the opioid epidemic on children and families.

Family First will also help to ensure family-based care for children who need foster care. The law builds on previous requirements that children be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate for their special needs. Once implemented, the law will target federal dollars toward certain categories of placements: family foster homes; qualified residential treatment programs for children and youth with special treatment needs; and settings for children and youth with special circumstances such as pregnant and parenting teens, older youth in supervised independent living settings, or programs serving children who have been or are at-risk

of becoming victims of sex trafficking. These provisions will improve funding incentives to match the best evidence of what children need, by supporting placements in family settings so that children can heal and ultimately thrive.

Thank you again for your leadership in enacting this important and comprehensive child welfare reform legislation. We are also especially appreciative of the bipartisan leadership of Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin in the House and Finance Committee Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden in the Senate. This law will truly benefit vulnerable children and families who come to the attention of child welfare systems and represents a huge step forward for the field.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Adopt America Network
Adoption Exchange Association
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
America Forward
American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Art Therapy Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Beyond Adoptions, Inc.
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Child Care Aware® of America
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Family Futures
Children Awaiting Parents, Donald J. Corbett Adoption Agency
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Hospital Association
Children's Leadership Council
Children's Rights
CLASP

Coalition on Human Needs
Comfort Consults, LLC
Covenant House International
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus
First Focus Campaign for Children
Foster Care to Success
FosterClub
Fragile Families NETWORK
Generations United
Girls Inc.
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Grand Families of America
Healthy Families America
Healthy Teen Network
Juvenile Law Center
Lutheran Services in America
National Adoption Center
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for Children of Addiction
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Center on Housing and Child Welfare
National Center on Shared Leadership®
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Children's Alliance
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association
National Family Preservation Network
National Foster Parent Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Kinship Alliance for Children
National Respite Coalition
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Nurse-Family Partnership

Parents Anonymous® Inc.
Parents as Teachers National Center
Prevent Child Abuse America
Power to Decide
Ray E. Helfer Society
Results for America
School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)
Strengthening Families All Across America
The Adoption Exchange, Inc.
The Arc of the United States
The Children's Village
The Dalton Daley Group
The Kempe Foundation
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The National Crittenton Foundation
The RISE Institute
Treatment Communities of America
True Colors Fund
Voice for Adoption
Youth Law Center
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations:

Alaska

Alaska Children's Trust
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter
Northwest Resource Associates, Programs in Oregon, Alaska & Washington

Alabama

Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Arizona

A New Leaf
American Academy of Pediatrics, Arizona Chapter
Arizona Association for Foster and Adoptive Parents
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors
Arizona Partnership for Children LLP
Arizona State University Center for Child Well-Being
Child and Family Resources Inc.
Children's Action Alliance
Coconino Coalition for Children & Youth
Grandfamilies of Surprise

Arkansas

Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

California

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 1
American Academy of Pediatrics California Chapter 3
American Academy of Pediatrics California Chapter 4
American Academy of Pediatrics, Orange County Chapter
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Programs Executives
Center Point, Inc.
Chadwick Center for Children and Families
Children's Defense Fund - California
Fair Trade LA
Girls Inc. of Alameda County, CA
Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, CA
Girls Inc. of Greater Los Angeles, CA
Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara, CA
Girls Inc. of Orange County, CA
Girls Inc. of the Island City in the City of Alameda, CA
OC Kinship & Support Org
Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
The Village Family Services
University of California Davis Guardian Professions Program

Colorado

Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains

Connecticut

All Our Kin, Inc.
Children in Placement, CT - Inc.
Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Delaware

American Academy of Pediatrics, Delaware Chapter
District of Columbia
Adoptions Together
American Academy of Pediatrics, D.C. Chapter
The Washington Children's Foundation

Florida

Children's Home Society of Florida
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Florida's Children First
Kinship Children's Home Network

Georgia

American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Chapter
Voices for Georgia's Children

Hawaii

American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter
EPIC `Ohana

Idaho

Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois

Children's Home + Aid
Gift of Hope, Grandparents and Others Raising America's Children
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
Youth Outreach Services, Inc.

Indiana

G.A.P. LIMITED
Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Indiana Connected By 25, Inc.
Lutheran Social Services of Indiana

Iowa

Child and Family Policy Center
Iowa Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

Kansas

Kansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
Foster Adopt Connect

Kentucky

Children, Inc.
Family & Children's Place
Foster Adopt Connect
Homeless & Housing Coalition of Kentucky
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Louisiana

Louisiana CASA Association
Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Maine

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and Kinship Program
Community Care
Families and Children Together
Island Community Center
Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Maryland

Adoptions Together
Grandfamilies PTSA, Inc.
Harford County Kinship Navigation
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Family Network
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
The Children's Guild
WIN Family Services

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Michigan

Michigan's Children
Michigan Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan League for Public Policy

Minnesota

American Academy of Pediatrics Minnesota Chapter
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota
Main Street Family Services

Mississippi

Children's Defense Fund - Mississippi
Families as Allies
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative

Missouri

Foster Adopt Connect
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Missouri KidsFirst

Montana

Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed
Nebraska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada

American Academy of Pediatrics Nevada Chapter
Lutheran Social Services of Nevada

New Hampshire

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
New Hampshire Children's Trust, Inc.
New Hampshire Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
New Hampshire Pediatric Society
The Family Resource Center

New Jersey

New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

New Mexico

Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership
New Mexico Pediatric Society
PB &J Family Services, Inc.

New York

Bridge Builders
Children's Aid
Children's Defense Fund - New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Girls Inc. of New York City
Girls Inc. of the Greater Capital Region
Girls Inc. of Westchester
Graham Windham
Harlem Dowling, West Side Center for Children & Family Services
New York State American Academy of Pediatrics
New York State American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter 2
New York State American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter 3
New York Zero-to-Three Network
NYS Kinship Navigator
The Children's Village

North Carolina

Children's Home Society of North Carolina
Children's Hope Alliance
FIRST
Exchange Family Center
National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter
North Carolina Pediatric Society

North Dakota

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch
North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Ohio

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
United Way of Hardin County, Inc.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Oregon

Children First for Oregon
Northwest Resource Associates, Programs in Oregon, Alaska & Washington
Oregon Adoption Resource Exchange
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center

Pennsylvania

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (serves Eastern PA)
Wesley Family Services

South Carolina

Children's Trust of South Carolina
South Carolina Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

South Dakota

South Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Tennessee

Texas

Buckner International
Children's Defense Fund - Texas
Community Partners of Montgomery County

Nexus Recover Center
North Texas Alliance to Reduce Pregnancy in Teens (NTARUPT)
Texas Foster Family Association
Texas Pediatric Society
TexProtects
The Bravehearts

Utah

Children's Service Society of Utah
Utah Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Utah Children

Virginia

Adoptions Together
Family Services Network
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Children's Home Society of Washington
HopeSparks
Many Lights Foundation
Northwest Resource Associates, Programs in Oregon, Alaska & Washington
Partners for Our Children
Treehouse
Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

West Virginia

The West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Wisconsin

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
American Academy of Pediatrics, Wisconsin Chapter

Wyoming

Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wyoming Kinship Advocacy