

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