

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF
AMERICA TESTIMONY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 16, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to your attention Part II of the testimony of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) when they testified before the Human Resources Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee on May 23, 2006.

The purpose of the testimony given was to share with the Subcommittee important measures to improve our nation's child protective services. It is my hope that my colleagues will find this information useful as well as informative as we focus on legislation that addresses the needs and care of our children.

CWLA POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON
PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The Reauthorization of Promoting Safe and Stable Families—Of most immediate importance for this Committee is the reauthorization of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program (PSSF) beyond FY 2006. PSSF supports four vital services that address four different types of families in need: those in need of basic support services to strengthen the family and keep them whole, families being reunified, families we are trying to preserve, and adoptive families in need of support. As you review some of the key needs included in this testimony, the Subcommittee can see how the issues of prevention, aftercare, permanency and stability and maintaining families are all addressed by these categories.

CWLA believes these services and families should continue to be the target for PSSF in a reauthorization bill:

Family Support Services (FSS) were developed to respond to the concerns, interests, and needs of families within a community. Family Support Services are targeted to families with difficulties and concerns related to the proper functioning of the family and care of the children. The focus of the program is on prevention. The services address the need to improve the well-being of a child, family functioning, and the parent's ability to provide for the family, before they are in crisis. In order to reach families in need of assistance, family support programs work with outside community organizations such as schools and child welfare agencies. The aim is to provide temporary relief to families and to teach them how to better nurture their children. Involvement in these services is voluntary. Types of services include parent education, child care relief, and selfhelp groups.

Reunification is the first permanency option states consider for children entering care. Yet, in many ways, it is the most challenging option to achieve in a plan-based, permanent way. We know that forty-eight percent of, or 246,650, children in care on September 30, 2003 had a case plan goal of reunification with their parents or other principal caretaker. At the same time, 151,770 children, or 55 percent of those children who left care in 2003, were returned to their parent's or caretaker's home.

Successful permanency through reunification requires many things, including skilled workers, readily available supportive and treatment resources, clear expectations and service plans, and excellent collaboration across involved agencies. Reunification also requires culturally appropriate support and treatment services for families and the crit-

ical need for after care or postpermanency services to ensure that safety and permanency are maintained following reunification.

Family Preservation Services (FPS) are comprehensive, short-term, intensive services for families delivered primarily in the home and designed to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children or to promote family reunification. The services are intended to protect a child in a home where allegations of child abuse or neglect have occurred, prevent subsequent abuse or neglect, prevent placement of a child, or reduce the stay for a child in out-of-home care. Families in need of family preservation services are usually referred by public welfare agencies. Services are provided within 24 hours of referral and the family's involvement is voluntary. These services respond to families on a 24-hour basis, including services such as family therapy, budgeting, nutrition, and parenting skills.

Adoption support is an important need as the number of adoptions have increased. There is still more work to be done. Services may include information and referral, case management services, support groups and a range of other services. Of the 523,085 children in foster care in 2003, approximately 119,000 were waiting to be adopted, with 68,000 of these children being free for adoption (parental rights had been terminated). Of the children waiting, 40 percent were black non-Hispanic, 37 percent were white non-Hispanic, 14 percent were Hispanic, and 4 percent were of undetermined ethnicity. In 2003, the median age of children waiting to be adopted was 8.7 years; 3 percent of the children waiting to be adopted were younger than 1 year; 32 percent were ages 1 to 5; 28 percent were ages 6 to 10; 30 percent were 11 to 15; and 6 percent were 16 to 18.

Use Of \$40 Million PSSF Increase—CWLA supports the extension of the \$40 million in mandatory funding that was included in the Deficit Reduction Act and we want to work with the Subcommittee and members of Congress to see that PSSF is at a minimum fully funded at the level of \$505 million as adopted by this Subcommittee in 2001. We feel there a need for more. As indicated earlier in our testimony, forty percent of children substantiated as abused or neglected do not receive follow up services. We also feel it bears repeating that there is need for more reunification, adoption and other support services than PSSF attempts to address. To truly reach the goal of safe and stable families this country needs to go much further in its funding and priority of the entire child welfare system.

CWLA recognizes that the Subcommittee and members of Congress see the \$40 million in mandatory funding as an opportunity to address some additional issues in the child welfare field. If that is the decision of the Congress we strongly urge you to make this the first step in a comprehensive strategy over the next few years to more fully address the needs of these children.

The draft legislation includes a workforce element tied to caseworker visits. CWLA supports regular and on-going visits to children in care. In the child welfare field visitation is not an isolated service or stand-alone intervention. Rather it is part of a larger case planning process. To reach this visitation goal we need a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the child welfare workforce.

We would not want a system of care where too few workers with very high caseloads are simply meeting an outcome measure of numbers. Rather each state should be assisted in implementing a long term workforce strategy that sets goals around reduced workforce turnover, higher education levels, adequate case loads, initial training and on-going

training, adequate supervision and the proper partnerships with educational institutions and other partners in workforce development.

For each state this will be different so we would urge the Subcommittee to craft legislation around such a flexible allocation of funding and planning that will work with states to develop outcomes and provide related data that can demonstrate progress toward a comprehensive workforce strategy or goals. Again, this is a long-term strategy that requires federal, state and local partnerships. It should also be recognized that \$40 million for fifty states may limit the kind of progress we all seek in advancing this goal. In addition, it will be difficult to determine how this designation of \$40 million will supplement and not supplant current state efforts since it will overlap with Title IV-E Administrative funding used for these critical purposes but we do highlight that additional resources are needed.

Possible Improvements—Access For Tribal Communities—In your reauthorization, CWLA suggests that the Subcommittee include the recommendations being proposed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Congress of American Indians and the Association of American Indian Affairs. Their joint proposal would set the reserved amounts of funding for tribal governments at 3 percent in both the mandatory and discretionary funding. A consortium of tribal governments could also apply for the funding and we endorse an authorization of a tribal court improvement program.

Better Data—As part of the application process, states submit information on how they intend to allocate their PSSF funding. This information should be collected and included in an annual report by HHS. We also urge the Subcommittee to include legislative language that would direct HHS to work with states to determine how to compile an annual report that would provide information on how funds are actually spent and would include information on families and children served. The annual reports by HHS on the Social Services Block Grant have only been issued since 1998, yet they have provided a stronger picture of why that funding is important to so many human service programs.

Mentoring of Children of Prisoners—We commend the Committee for including the reauthorization of the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program in this legislation. Mentoring for this population is an effective way to engage at-risk children and youth, provides connections to caring adults, and perhaps most importantly, builds relations among family members during and after incarceration. We know there are many areas in the country today where children of prisoners are not able to access this mentoring service due to lack of availability. Expansion is necessary and the Committee is to be commended for focusing on this. We urge the committee to carefully consider the following issues as this new initiative is implemented.

Currently there are 218 federally funded sites around the country where this mentoring is taking place, involving thousands of children. It would be tragic for these children to have their mentoring disrupted or ended prematurely. We urge the Committee to include provisions to allow these efforts to continue.

Researchers and mentoring experts have concluded that children facing multiple developmental risks benefit more from mentoring than other children; however, they require a higher quality of mentoring program and are more likely to be adversely affected by poor quality mentoring. We urge the Committee to examine carefully the expertise and background of all potential national

entities specific to mentoring children of prisoners. New trainings, techniques and curricula, have recently been developed. Whatever entity is chosen will need to be fully knowledgeable of these tools and prepared to make them available.

IV-B Part 1 Child Welfare Services—CWLA appreciates the Subcommittee's efforts to better align the IV-B Part 1, Child Welfare Services program with that of PSSF. This can add clarity to the understanding of funding sources although it is unclear to what extent IV-B 1 funds are spent on adoption, foster care and child care on an annual basis. In practical terms, since federal Title IV-E funds cover half or less than half of the children in foster care, it is also unclear that this change in statute will result in any increase in funding for services covered under IV-B part 1 or PSSF. Inevitably states must pick up the cost of foster care for children ineligible for IV-E by relying on other federal funds, state funds, local funds or a combination of all three.

CWLA also appreciates the Subcommittee's efforts at updating the state plan requirements. In addition we suggest the requirement to include a description of efforts to address the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system. These children represent African American/Black, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races.

Conclusion—CWLA appreciates the opportunity to offer our testimony and comments to the Subcommittee in regard to this reauthorization of Promoting Safe and Stable Families. As this legislation moves forward we look forward to a continued dialogue with the Subcommittee and Members of Congress. We also hope that this reauthorization serves as a building block for future efforts that will create a comprehensive reform that results in reduced numbers of children being abused and neglected and safer and permanent families for those children who do come into contact with the child welfare system.

IN MEMORIAM TO DAVID
HANSBERGER, FOR HIS CIVIC
LEADERSHIP IN YUCAIPA CALI-
FORNIA

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 16, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to express my sadness at the passing of a friend, David Hansberger of Yucaipa, whose civic leadership helped guide this growing community to cityhood and set it on a course to become a highly-desired destination city in my California district. Mr. Hansberger passed away this week, and all of his friends will feel the loss.

David Hansberger is a native of Redlands, my hometown, and received all of his education in our area. As he grew up, the Inland Empire also grew, from a semi-rural group of small cities to a population powerhouse—one of the largest urban growth areas in the United States. That we have been able to remain a fabulous place to live is a credit to local leaders like David Hansberger and his brother, Dennis, who is now a San Bernardino County Supervisor.

His public service career actually began in the Coast Guard, where he served 8 years and became a First Class Petty Officer and re-

ceived the Honor Man Award. When he returned to San Bernardino County, he became a leader in a number of our local industries: Owner-operator of Snow-Line Orchards for 13 years; manager of Tri-City Concrete and Perris Ready-Mix; Realtor for Hansberger-Tee-ters and Emerich and Company, and finally the District Manager of the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, protecting the natural assets of the growing area.

David applied this intimate knowledge of how San Bernardino County ticked to his civic activities. He served on hospital and charity boards, and was very active in the Jaycees, ultimately becoming a District Governor for that group. He was very popular as a caller at auction events for charities, and was given credit for dozens of extremely successful fundraisers for groups over the years.

Perhaps David Hansberger's largest contribution, however, was in helping guide the citizens of Yucaipa into cityhood. This booming area in the foothills on the east side of San Bernardino Valley had made four attempts at incorporation by the mid-1980s, and the lack of success had caused deep divisions in the community.

Mr. Hansberger took over as president of the Yucaipa City Incorporation Committee, and is widely credited with smoothing the rivalries and disagreements. Yucaipa voters finally voted to incorporate in 1989, and the city has grown to a population of 47,000. David Hansberger became a charter member of the city planning commission, and helped set a tone of top-quality home development that has made the city a beautiful place.

The friends of David Hansberger are legion—indeed, most people who knew him would say he never let anyone be a stranger for long. His genuine concern and compassion drew people to him, and he welcomed them as friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in expressing condolences to Mr. Hansberger's wife of 41 years, Sheila, and his children, grandchildren, parents and siblings. I ask you to join me as well in celebrating his wonderful contributions to making his community, and our world, a friendlier and more livable place.

HONORING ARTHUR GLIDDEN,
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF
THE WOLFEBORO CENTRE COM-
MUNITY CHURCH

HON. JEB BRADLEY

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 16, 2006

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Arthur Glidden for his hard work and dedication to the continuation and protection of the Wolfeboro Centre Community Church for over 43 years. Arthur Glidden is 83-years-old and has been a resident of my hometown of Wolfeboro for his entire life. Arthur's wife, Doty, is also a lifelong resident of the community and a supporter of the church.

In 1841, a group of Wolfeboro citizens purchased one third of an acre for \$17 to build a non-denominational worship center for the Christian members in the area. This traditional New England church was started and it contin-

ued in operation with the generous help of the congregation. In 1964, Arthur Glidden became President of the Church Board and began what has now become his long-standing devotion to the parishioners and the care and preservation of the building.

Arthur has taken the traditions of when the meetinghouse was first built and he has raised them to a higher level. For almost 25 percent of the life of the Wolfeboro Centre Community Church, he has been its greatest protector and benefactor. At times, almost single-handedly, Arthur lifted the church up to save it from declining attendance and carried it forward on his shoulders until it was safe and secure again.

Arthur Glidden is to be commended for his steadfast dedication to the Wolfeboro Centre Community Church, and all of his efforts to improve the community in which he lives.

H.R. 5252: THE COMMUNICATIONS
OPPORTUNITY, PROMOTION, AND
ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 16, 2006

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, Federal telecommunications law was last reformed in 1996. Many new technologies have been developed since then that have changed how Americans receive and seek information. This reform legislation is long overdue. I support reforming telecommunications law that will encourage investment, innovation, and competition in both telecommunications software and hardware. The delivery of telecommunications services to consumers, such as universal service, community access, and public safety must be protected. And, most importantly, any changes to telecommunication law intended to enhance competition must ensure consumer protections.

Unfortunately, the bill before us today does little to meet those goals and instead the consumer protections and community access we have come to expect could be in jeopardy. In addition, this bill forces unfunded mandates onto State and local governments and does little to prevent businesses from discriminating against consumers in order to enhance profit margins.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that intergovernmental mandates on State and local governments would increase over time—adding up to \$100 to \$350 million by 2011. This cost will ultimately be passed along to the families who use these services. And, while the bill maintains the rights of cities to manage rights-of-ways requirements, such as where telecommunications infrastructure can be laid and what city streets can be disrupted, this legislation prevents State and local consumer protection laws from applying to national franchise holders.

While the bill includes some “anti-discrimination” requirements intended to prevent providers from servicing areas based on income levels, these provisions are weak because the bill does not require companies to offer service to all communities within a specific area within a certain period of time. Weak anti-discrimination policies undermine the universal service principles that have been the pillars of