

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2016

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I request that the following extraneous materials on H.R. 5456, the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 be submitted:

CWLA, TOGETHER, MAKING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES A NATIONAL PRIORITY
Washington, DC, June 13, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Ways and Means Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. ORRIN HATCH,
Finance Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington DC.

Hon. SANDY LEVIN,
Ways and Means Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Finance Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY AND RANKING MEMBER LEVIN:

DEAR CHAIRMAN HATCH AND RANKING MEMBER WYDEN: The Child Welfare League of America endorses the Families First Prevention Services Act. We feel that the legislation offers the important possibility of allowing funds to provide vital mental health, substance use and in-home services that could help children stay with their own families. Current funding for this important part of a continuum of needed services is lacking and we know we must address these areas if we are to strengthen the well-being and outcomes for children and families that come to the child welfare and child protection systems.

This legislation provides an important re-authorization of the two Title IV-B programs including an extension of the adoption-kinship incentives, court improvement funds, workforce development funds tied to case-worker visits, and the regional partnership grants. The bill includes some needed improvements to the Chaffee program in regard to the age of eligibility.

We hope to work with the Congress and the Administration in the implementation of some of the more challenging aspects of the bill to make sure that the oversight and implementation of the residential care parts of this law are carried out in the most effective way possible. In the years ahead we also hope to push Congress on new strategies that can go beyond simply reallocating current child welfare funds and instead invest in what is truly needed and proven effective.

Thank you again for your dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE JAMES-BROWN,
President/CEO, Child Welfare League of America.

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives.

Hon. ORRIN HATCH,
Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
Chairman, Human Resources Subcommittee, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives.

Hon. SANDY LEVIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives.

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate.

Hon. LLOYD DOGGETT,
Ranking Member, Human Resources Subcommittee, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives.

DEAR WAYS AND MEANS AND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN BRADY AND HATCH, RANKING MEMBERS LEVIN AND WYDEN AND HUMAN RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUCHANAN AND RANKING MEMBER DOGGETT: One of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF)'s first reports decades ago was Children without Homes: An Examination of Public Responsibility to Children in Out-of-Home Care and we have been unrelenting since in our advocacy for children who come to the attention of the child welfare system and their families. Today I offer CDF's full support of the proposed Family First Prevention Services Act. It takes historic and long overdue steps to direct federal child welfare dollars to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families. I urge you to move toward a timely mark up in both the House and Senate so these vulnerable children do not have to wait longer for these important reforms.

Especially significant are the redirected funds in the Act for services and programs to assist children at risk of foster care to remain safely with parents or family caregivers. The proposal ensures quality prevention and treatment services for mental health and substance abuse problems that bring many families to the attention of the child welfare system. Such services and treatment are especially critical in responding to the current heroin and opioid epidemic, and we applaud additional provisions to address this crisis. The proposal also helps strengthen families and protect children by providing them in-home skill-based services. At the same time, it requires states to have a plan to track and prevent child maltreatment fatalities.

The Family First Prevention Services Act takes important steps to ensure children who need foster care will be placed in the least-restrictive most family-like setting appropriate to their needs, and gives special attention to children whose emotional or other special needs require residential treatment. It continues to recognize and increase supports for grandparents and other relatives who step in to care for children when their parents cannot; addresses the special needs of pregnant and parenting teens and protections for their children; and offers supports to help older youth transition from foster care to adulthood. There is a continued important emphasis on ensuring permanent families for children.

This new proposal builds on your Committees' work on previous bipartisan and bi-

cameral child welfare legislation. In fact, it was 36 years ago today, June 13th, 1980 that the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act was passed by Congress and then signed into law on June 17th. You followed that with the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Foster Care Independence Act, the Fostering Connections to Success and increasing Adoptions Act, and more recently the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, to name several, all of which included provisions to begin to better align federal funding with improved outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. The Family First Preventive Services Act now takes important next steps.

The Children's Defense Fund looks forward to working with all of you to make the proposed improvements for children in the Family First Prevention Services Act a reality. Thank you for your continuing leadership on behalf of these most vulnerable children and their families.

Sincerely yours,

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN,
President.

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY
OF AMERICA,
Chicago, IL, June 14, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Congress, Washington, DC.

Hon. SANDY LEVIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Congress, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY AND RANKING MEMBER LEVIN: As a nationwide membership organization comprised of many of the most long standing and respected child and family organizations in the country, Children's Home Society of America is writing in support of your efforts to promote and improve outcomes for many of the hundreds of thousands of children and youth who come to the attention of the child welfare system each year, including children in foster care. Over the decades the House Ways and Means Committee, with bipartisan support, has taken significant steps forward on behalf of our most vulnerable children and the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 continues those efforts.

Allowing funds under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, currently used primarily for out-of-home care for children, to be used for the first time for prevention services to help keep children at risk of placement in foster care safely at home with their parents or with kin is a significant move in the right direction. Kinship caregivers play a critical role in protecting children temporarily while their parents are not able to and also in ensuring new permanent families for children who cannot return home.

We strongly support the bill's recognition of the importance of quality services for these children, which are evidence-based and trauma-informed and the importance of accountability in tracking the provision of services and their benefits for children. States at different stages in reforming their systems will also have help training staff for the development and delivery of these new services and putting in place the infrastructure needed to administer and oversee their delivery and child outcomes.

The Family First Prevention Services Act over time also will take important steps to

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in **this typeface** indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

ensure children who need to enter foster care will be placed in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs, by targeting federal dollars only on smaller family-foster homes and on other care settings for children and youth with special treatment needs or those in special circumstances, such as pregnant and parenting teens or older youth in independent living settings. A number of states already have undertaken special efforts to reduce the number of children in congregate care and to preserve group care settings for children with special treatment needs.

Children and society pay a high cost when the current systems fail to adequately address the needs of the children who come to the attention of our child welfare systems, nearly 80 percent of whom are victims of neglect. We believe that the specific changes proposed will go far in encouraging state and local child welfare systems, private providers, the courts and youth and families who have been involved in the system to work together to achieve significant change for children over the next decade.

We look forward to working with you to ensure these new child welfare finance reforms will truly benefit children who come to the attention of the child welfare system and to continue to explore additional improvements on their behalf to ensure they all have safe, permanent families. Thank you for your continuing leadership on behalf of these children.

Sincerely,

SHARON OSBORNE,
Board Chair, Children's Home
Society of America.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF WISCONSIN,
Milwaukee, WI.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
Chairman, Human Resources Subcommittee,
House Committee on Ways & Means, Washington DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BUCHANAN: Children's Hospital of Wisconsin strongly supports the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 (H.R. 5456). We applaud your leadership on this important issue.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Children's) is the region's only independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. We serve children from every county in the state and are recognized as one of the leading pediatric health care centers in the United States. In addition, Children's is the largest not-for-profit, community-based child and family serving agency in Wisconsin. Through our Community Services work, we provide a continuum of care to more than 15,000 children and families annually. This includes family preservation and support, child and family counseling, child welfare, child advocacy and protection, and foster care and adoption services.

We strongly support the Family First Prevention Services Act that would allow funds under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to be used for the first time for evidence-based prevention services to help keep children at risk of placement in foster care safely at home with their parents or with kin. The legislation represents a significant and meaningful shift in child welfare policy by prioritizing up-front, evidence-based services to keep families together. We know from experience and empirical research that this is important for the healthy development of children.

The bill also makes significant advancements to integrate interventions and measures focused on child well-being into the child welfare system. Children's believes that prioritizing and providing accountability for child well-being, in addition to

safety and permanency, is critical to achieving better outcomes for children and society and positioning children to thrive into adulthood.

Children's is committed to improving the health and well-being of children and families. We believe the Family First Prevention Services Act will enable the child welfare system to better serve our most vulnerable children and families.

Sincerely,

AMY HERBST,
Vice President, Child Well-Being,
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

FIRST FOCUS
CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN,
Washington, DC, June 14, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. ORRIN HATCH,
Chairman, Committee on Finance,
U.S. Senate, Washington DC.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
Chairman, Human Resources Subcommittee,
Committee on Ways and Means, House of
Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. SANDER LEVIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and
Means, House of Representatives, Wash-
ington, DC.

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance, U.S.
Senate, Washington DC.

Hon. LLOYD DOGGETT,
Ranking Member, Human Resources Sub-
committee, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMEN BRADY AND HATCH, RANK-
ING MEMBERS LEVIN AND WYDEN, CHAIRMAN
BUCHANAN AND RANKING MEMBER DOGGETT:
On behalf of the First Focus Campaign for
Children (FFCC), a bipartisan organization
committed to making children and their
families a priority in federal policy and
budget decisions, I am writing in strong sup-
port of H.R. 5456, the Family First Preven-
tion Services Act of 2016. This bill that
makes important policy changes in federal
child welfare spending that better support
the needs of vulnerable children and fami-
lies.

Currently, there are 415,000 children in the
foster care system, a number that has in-
creased by 3.5 percent from 2014. Nearly 31
percent of children placed in foster care were
removed due to parental alcohol or drug use,
and in some states, the percentage of re-
moval due to parental substance abuse is
closer to 60 percent. In addition, 57,000 chil-
dren in foster care live in group homes or
congregate care settings. These children and
youth do not have a clinical need to be in
such a setting, and should be with families
who can provide love and support.

The Family First Prevention Services Act of
2016 contains many important provisions
that address these poor statistics and will
make a significant impact in strengthening
and keeping families together. For the first
time states will be able to use federal dollars
from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to
provide time-limited, evidence-based services
to families. The services are aimed to
help prevent children from entering the fos-
ter care system by allowing federal reim-
bursement to families for mental health
services, substance abuse treatment, and in-
home parent skill-based programs. In addi-
tion, the bill incentivizes states to ensure
that children are placed in family-based set-
tings by only allowing federal reim-
bursement after an assessment has occurred and it
has been determined that the child should be
placed in a quality residential treatment
program.

The legislation also includes a number of
other provisions aimed to reform and

strengthen the child welfare system includ-
ing the extension of the Title IV-B program,
improving supports for youth transitioning
to adulthood, establishing model foster care
licensing standards, and calling for a GAO
review to examine compliance of states in
reinvesting savings from the federal adop-
tion assistance reimbursement for special
needs kids

We look forward to working with you to
ensure these new child welfare finance re-
forms will truly benefit children who come
to the attention of the child welfare system
and to continue to explore additional im-
provements on their behalf to ensure they all
have safe, permanent families. Thank you
for your continued leadership on behalf of
these children.

Sincerely,

BRUCE LESLEY,
President.

CELEBRATING THE EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MRS. SYLVIA CRIER

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today
to congratulate Mrs. Sylvia Crier on receiving
the annual New Orleans Excellence in Teach-
ing Award from New Schools for New Orleans.
The Excellence in Teaching Award is given to
a teacher that goes above and beyond for
their students and who has a powerful impact
on their school community.

Mrs. Crier began her teaching career more
than 51 years ago when New Orleans public
schools were newly integrated. Prior to start-
ing her teaching career, Mrs. Crier received
her Bachelor's of Science in English from
Tuskegee University and moved to New Orle-
ans shortly after—and we're glad she did.

At the young age of 75, Mrs. Crier has
taught English, U.S. History, civics and busi-
ness to generations of New Orleans students.
Currently, the students of McDonough 35 High
are lucky enough to have a teacher who is in-
vested in not only their educational achieve-
ment but also their professional and personal
development.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the Crier family in
celebrating Mrs. Crier's dedication to her stu-
dents and receiving this achievement.

RECOGNIZING W. MARK DONALD, DMD, MAGD AS THE 52ND PRESI- DENT OF THE ACADEMY OF GEN- ERAL DENTISTRY

HON. GREGG HARPER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on
the occasion of the 2016 Academy of General
Dentistry's Annual meeting in Boston, Massa-
chusetts to commend and congratulate W.
Mark Donald, DMD, MAGD, for his service as
the 52nd President of the Academy of General
Dentistry (AGD) 2015–2016.

A Louisville, Mississippi native, Dr. Donald
is a graduate of Mississippi State University
and the University of Mississippi School of