

September 6, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the just more than 400 national, state and local undersigned organizations, we are writing to express support for and urge passage of H.R. 5456, the Family First Prevention Services Act. This bipartisan legislation passed the House of Representatives in June with overwhelming support. It is now time for the Senate to act. The legislation would strengthen families so more children could remain safely with their parents and family caregivers and avoid the need for foster care. Children do best in families and this legislation represents an historic step toward better aligning federal child welfare policy with this goal.

We represent advocates for children, youth and families, public and private providers, foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers and alumni of foster care. We applaud the Act's steps to provide federal investments in evidence-based prevention and early intervention to keep more children safely with their parents and family caregivers and out of foster care. Specifically, the Act would allow states to access federal funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for quality mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services and in-home parent skill-based programs. These and other provisions in the Act would support states and communities in responding to the national opioid crisis, which has increased child welfare caseloads and left thousands of families and children vulnerable.

The Family First Prevention Services Act also aims to better ensure family-based care for children who need foster care. The legislation builds on current law's policy specifying that children should be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate for their special needs. Three years after its enactment federal dollars will be targeted only on children in family-foster homes or qualified residential settings for children and youth with special treatment needs or on those in special circumstances, such as pregnant and parenting teens or older youth in supervised independent living settings.

We urge you to take action on this important legislation by September 30, the end of the federal fiscal year. Senate passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act will truly benefit vulnerable children and families who come to the attention of child welfare systems. Thank you.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Academic Pediatric Association
Adopt America Network
Adoption Exchange Association
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families

American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Dance Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Beyond Adoptions, Inc.
Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Bridges International
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Native American Youth
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Child Care Aware® of America
Children and Family Futures
Children's Home Society of America
Children's Hospital Association
Children's Rights
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Leadership Council
CLASP
Coalition on Human Needs
Comfort Consults, LLC
CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Eating Disorders Coalition
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
Family Voices
First Focus Campaign for Children
Foster Care Alumni of America
FosterClub
Generations United
Girls Inc.
Healthy Families America
Healthy Teen Network
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI USA)
Juvenile Law Center
Lutheran Services in America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Adoption Center

National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Center for Youth Law
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Center on Child Welfare and Housing
National Center on Shared Leadership®
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Children's Alliance
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association
National Family Preservation Network
National Foster Parent Association
National Foster Youth Institute
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Indian Health Board
National Kinship Alliance for Children
National Latino Children's Institute
National Network for Youth
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
National Respite Coalition
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents Anonymous® Inc.
Parents as Teachers
Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere (P.E.A.C.E.)
Pediatric Policy Council
Pressley Ridge
Prevent Child Abuse America
RaiseAChild
Ray E. Helfer Society
Results For America
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
School Social Work Association of America
Society for Pediatric Research
Strengthening Families All Across America
The Adoption Exchange, Inc.
The Arc
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
The Children's Village
The Kempe Foundation
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
The National Crittenton Foundation
The RISE Institute

Think of Us
Treatment Communities of America
Voice for Adoption
Youth Law Center
Youth Villages
Zepeda Learning and Leadership
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations:

Alaska

Alaska Children's Trust
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter

Alabama

Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Family Focused Treatment Association
Seraaj Family Homes
Youth Villages - Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Arizona

American Academy of Pediatrics - Arizona Chapter
Arizona Association for Foster and Adoptive Parents
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation
Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors
Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services
Arizona Partnership for Children LLP
Arizona's Children Association
Casa de los Niños
Child and Family Resources Inc.
Child Crisis Arizona
Children's Action Alliance
Coconino Coalition for Children & Youth
Coconino County Education Service Agency
Family Involvement Center
Human Resource Training, Inc.
Jewish Family & Children's Service

National Association of Social Workers, Arizona Chapter
Prevent Child Abuse Arizona
Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition
RISE Services, Inc.
Southern Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors/Tucson
Southwest Human Development, Inc.
Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development
UMOM New Day Centers
West Valley Neighborhoods Coalition

California

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 1
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 2
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 3
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Programs Executives
Center Point, Inc.
Children's Defense Fund - California
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Extended Child Care Coalition of Sonoma County
Fair Trade LA
Family Preservation Community Services
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
South of Market Child Care, Inc.
Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
The Village Family Service
United Advocates for Children and Families
University of California Davis Guardian Professions Program

Colorado

Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Colorado Youth Matter
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
Maple Star Colorado

Connecticut

All Our Kin, Inc.
Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

District of Columbia

Adoptions Together
American Academy of Pediatrics, District of Columbia Chapter
The Children's Guild

Delaware

American Academy of Pediatrics, Delaware Chapter
Children & Families First

Florida

AAJ Research & Evaluation
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.
Florida's Children First
Lutheran Services Florida

Georgia

American Academy of Pediatrics - Georgia Chapter
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness
Hosea Helps
North Georgia Community Action, Inc.
St. John's Lutheran Church
Together Georgia Provider Alliance, Inc.
Voices for Georgia's Children
Youth Villages - Georgia

Hawaii

American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter
EPIC `Ohana

Iowa

Child and Family Policy Center
Integrative Counseling Solutions
Iowa Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Parenting Way, Inc.

Idaho

Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois

Camelot Care Centers, Inc.
Children's Home + Aid
Gift of Hope, Grandparents and Others Raising America's Children
GROW in Illinois
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
Passages Alternative Living Programs, Inc.
The Family Defense Center
Universal Family Connection, Inc.
Youth Outreach Services, Inc.

Indiana

Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Indiana Connected By 25
Phoenix Institute
Prevent Child Abuse Indiana
Youth Villages - Indiana

Kansas

Kansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
Russell Child Development Center, Inc.

Kentucky

Children, Inc.
Family & Children's Place
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Kinship Families Coalition of Kentucky
Open Arms Relative Caregivers Network

Louisiana

Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
LouisianaChildren.org

Massachusetts

Institute for Health and Recovery, Inc.
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Youth Villages - Massachusetts

Maryland

Adoptions Together
Advocates for Children and Youth
Baby's Bounty
Children's Rights Fund
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Family Network
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
The Children's Guild
The Family Tree
WIN Family Services

Maine

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

Michigan

Families On The Move, Inc.
Fostering Hopes & Futures
Kids Belong
Michigan Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan's Children

Minnesota

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

Missouri

Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
St. Louis Area Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

Mississippi

Children's Defense Fund – Southern Regional Office
Disability Rights Mississippi
Families as Allies
Hope Family Resource
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Mississippi Families for Kids
Mississippi Human Services Coalition
Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative
Youth Villages - Mississippi

Montana

Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

North Carolina

Catawba Valley Healthy Families
Children's Home Society of North Carolina
Children's Hope Alliance
Exchange Family Center
Family Preservation Community Services
FIRST North Carolina
National Association of Social Workers (North Carolina Chapter)
North Carolina Pediatric Society
Stephenson Consultation
Youth Villages - North Carolina

North Dakota

North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed
Nebraska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Nebraska Children's Home Society
Voices for Children in Nebraska

New Hampshire

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
New Hampshire Children's Trust, Inc.
New Hampshire Pediatric Society
The Family Resource Center
Youth Villages - New Hampshire

New Jersey

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Parents Anonymous of New Jersey Inc.
Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey
The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

New Mexico

La Familia, Inc.
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks
New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership
New Mexico Pediatric Society
New Mexico Voices for Children
PB&J Family Services, Inc.

Nevada

American Academy of Pediatrics Nevada Chapter
Baby's Bounty
Children's Advocacy Alliance
Lutheran Social Services of Nevada
St. Jude's Ranch for Children

New York

American Academy of Pediatrics District II
Children Awaiting Parents
Children's Defense Fund - New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.
Family Ties of Westchester
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 and 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
The Art of Practicing Institute
The Children's Aid Society
The Children's Village

Ohio

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Parents Anonymous® of Ohio
United Way of Hardin County, Inc.
Voices for Ohio's Children

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Youth Villages - Oklahoma

Oregon

CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties
CASA of Linn County
Citizen Review Board - Oregon's Foster Care Review Board
OHSU
Oregon Adoption Resource Exchange (OARE)
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC)
RISE Services, Inc.
Youth Villages - Oregon

Pennsylvania

CASA Youth Advocates
CLDA Diaper Bank
Crawford County CASA
Disability Rights Pennsylvania
Family Services of Western Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (serves Eastern PA)

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

South Carolina

Children's Trust of South Carolina
Family Preservation Community Services
South Carolina Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

South Dakota

South Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Tennessee

Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Youth Villages - Tennessee

Texas

Buckner International
Children's Defense Fund - Texas
Community Partners of Montgomery County
Family Focused Treatment Association Texas Chapter
Fortified City Group
Friends of Wednesday's Child
Journey to Dream
League of Women Voters of Dallas
NTARUPT (North Texas Alliance to Reduce Pregnancy in Teens)
Nurse Family Partnership (at Texas Children's Health Plan)
One Voice Texas
RESULTS Tarrant County
Texas Pediatric Society
TexProtects
Voices for Children of San Antonio

Utah

Children's Service Society of Utah
RISE Services, Inc.
Utah Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Utah Children

Virginia

Adolescent and Family Growth Center, Inc.
Adoptions Together
Emmanuel Family Services, LLC
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Virginia's Children

Vermont

Vermont Kin As Parents

Washington

Children's Home Society of Washington
HopeSparks
Many Lights Foundation
Partners for Our Children
Treehouse

Wisconsin

American Academy of Pediatrics, Wisconsin Chapter
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
Interfaith Older Adult Programs

West Virginia

KVC West Virginia
The West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Upshur County Family Resource Network

Wyoming

Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wyoming Kinship Advocacy