



March 13, 2014

The Honorable Dave G. Reichert
Chairman, Human Resources Subcommittee
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reichert:

The American Public Human Services Association and its affiliate the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators are pleased to support the *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act* (H.R. 4058). Our human service executives and public child welfare leaders appreciate your efforts to address the growing concerns around domestic child trafficking, including its troubling intersection with the child welfare system. H.R. 4058 is a strong step forward in addressing this intersection, reducing foster youth's risk of becoming trafficking victims, and improving opportunities for these youth.

Child welfare leaders acknowledge the critical role the agency plays in identifying and intervening on behalf of those identified as victims of trafficking and support measures in the bill on screening and documenting reported cases. As demonstrated by testimony given during past Committee hearings, we understand the need for a coordinated approach across multiple disciplines to address the physical, mental, and behavioral health needs of victims. These efforts support several guiding principles our members outlined in APHSA's policy and practice agenda, *Pathways*. *Pathways* calls for sound policies that build on proven practices, promote integrated approaches in the delivery system, and offer a more balanced accountability structure.

APHSA, NAPCWA, and our members across the human service continuum are committed to working with Congress and the Administration to develop appropriate measures to ensure states have the tools and resources necessary to reduce the prevalence of domestic child sex trafficking. While the bill pushes us closer to that goal, it is not a panacea. APHSA hopes you will continue to hold hearings focused on the role of child welfare in promoting safety, permanency, and well-being and align the current fiscal and policy construct to support our shared national priorities. Many states lack sufficient up-front resources to stabilize families so children can remain safe in their own homes and when necessary, implement evidence informed / evidence based practices that promote well-being and secure permanency for those that cannot return home.

The Title IV-E agency is one component of the child welfare system. Finance reform is the first step toward transforming the child welfare system and reaffirming the federal, state, local, and

tribal shared commitment to ensure children are nurtured in loving homes, within self-sufficient families where they can learn, grow, and thrive. Congress has held hearings examining child welfare financing that focused mostly on Title IV-E demonstration waivers. Yet, we have not seen a serious effort made to move comprehensive legislation. We understand the issues associated with finding additional federal resources to support the initial upfront investments needed to align finances and practices, but we do not believe this should inhibit Congressional action to finding a solution. To that end, we offer our expertise and assistance to you and the Ways and Means Committee on proposals that spur innovation, allow for continuous improvement, and emphasize federal priorities for child safety and well being.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments. Again, on behalf of state human service executives and public child welfare administrators, we applaud your leadership in addressing the increasing concerns of domestic sex trafficking amongst youth under the care and supervision of child welfare. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Crayton at (202) 682-0100 ext. 257 or christina.crayton@aphsa.org.

Sincerely,



Tracy L. Wareing
Executive Director
American Public Human Services Association



Gregory E. Rose
Dep. Dir., Children and Fam. Services Div.
CA Department of Social Services
President, NAPCWA

Cc: The Honorable Lloyd Doggett, Ranking Member, Human Resources Subcommittee