June 13, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

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 reauthorization of the two Title IV-B programs including an extension of the adoption-kinship incentives, court improvement funds, workforce development funds tied to caseworker 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