



*... because every child needs a permanent, loving, and culturally sensitive family*

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin  
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Vern Buchanan  
Chairman, Human Resources Subcommittee  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett  
Ranking Member, Human Resources Subcommittee  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Brady and Hatch, Ranking Members Levin and Wyden, and Chairman Buchanan and Ranking Member Doggett:

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) is pleased to support the Family First Prevention Services Act, and we look forward to working with you to ensure passage and implementation of this important legislation. NACAC is a national organization dedicated to the belief that children and youth need and deserve a permanent family.

I want to particularly highlight three provisions of the Act:

- We were glad to see that the act specifically mentions that Title IV-E will be able to cover preventive services for adoptive and guardianship families, along with birth families and relative caregivers. We have known far too many adoptive families who have been told that their children must reenter foster care to access services. In some of these cases, adoptive families must be charged with abuse and neglect for their children to receive the services they need. The Act will expand the availability of such services and reflects the reality that many families, including adoptive families, need targeted, effective services to meet their children's needs and prevent foster care entry.
- The emphasis on family-based placements rather than group care is something that NACAC has long supported. We firmly believe that far too many children are placed in group care for no therapeutic reason, which research suggests can harm children. We also know that placement with relatives or foster families increases the likelihood that

children will achieve permanency, whether through reunification, kin placement, guardianship, or adoption. Group care has a place in the child welfare system when it is therapeutic and effective, never as a convenient default.

- Finally, we are pleased to see that the Government Accounting Office will study and report on how states are reinvesting the funds they receive as a result of the Fostering Connections Act's expansion of Title IV-E adoption assistance eligibility. We know that too few families currently have access to needed post-adoption and post-guardianship services, and think these reinvested funds can be a valuable tool to support families post-permanency.

We are also pleased to see the reauthorization of Title IV-B and the Adoption and Guardianship Incentive Program. The incentive program has been an important source of funding for support services for adoptive and guardian families. In addition, we strongly support increased investment in services to prevent foster placements for all families, the supports for kinship care providers, and the expansion of the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise. We have seen through the pilot that the use of such a system will speed placements of children in foster care and adoption.

We acknowledge that the Act would delay the implementation of expanded IV-E eligibility to children under age four, but we believe that the bill's provisions are so important that we are able to support this offset.

We will offer support in implementation of the Act to ensure that the post-adoption services in the bill are available to families who need them and that states are investing in efforts to recruit, develop, and support foster and kin families for children who would otherwise be in group care. We will also review the GAO study to ensure that states are investing as required in post-adoption and post-guardianship services.

Thank you again for your support of these valuable improvements in our child welfare system. Please let me know if you need anything from us as you move forward with the Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Boo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Boo  
Executive Director