



June 12, 2017

The Honorable Kristi Noem
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Judy Chu
2423 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Noem and Congresswoman Chu:

The Child Welfare League of America offers its endorsement for HR 2857, Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act.

The legislation will provide a small but important support to expand access to family-based residential substance use treatment services while keeping families together.

As a country, we have taken significant strides in reducing the nation's foster care numbers in this century. Foster care caseloads stood at 568,000 in 1999. During these past two decades, in part because of congressional support, the number of children and youth in foster care decreased to 397,000 by 2012.

Last year's foster care numbers released by HHS indicated that in 2015, 427,910 children were in foster care, an eight-percent increase since 2012. New data suggests that drug abuse by the parent was the primary reason for the child's removal in 32 percent of cases.

The progress of the recent past is being threatened by the increased use of opioids and other substances. To counter this, we need to continue to expand access to substance use treatment. This legislation can be an important change to expand options for treatment and ultimately reduce the number of children in foster care and keep families together.

Again, thank you for your support and interest in this issue we hope we can continue to come together around some important federal investments and reforms in child welfare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine James Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris James-Brown
President and CEO