

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE COALITION

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April 26, 2007

The Honorable David Obey
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

As members and affiliates of the National Child Abuse Coalition committed to strengthening the federal response to the protection of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect, we urge your support to include in the FY08 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill funding for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) programs at the authorized levels:

- CAPTA basic state grants at \$84 million for strengthening states' child protection systems,
- CAPTA Title II community-based prevention grants funding at \$80 million, and
- CAPTA discretionary research and demonstration grants at \$36 million, as the President's budget proposes.

Basic State Grants: States are hard pressed to treat children or protect them from further harm, a fact that is particularly troubling when the youngest children suffer the highest victimization rate. CAPTA funds have not kept pace with the needs of communities for supporting families and protecting children. At current funding levels, child protection agencies are unable to serve hundreds of thousands of abused and neglected children in their caseloads. In 2005, according to the most recent HHS data, over 3 million reports of possible abuse and neglect were made to states, and almost 900,000 of these reports were substantiated. In 2005, almost 40 percent of the child victims received no services following a substantiated report of maltreatment: suspected abuse was reported, the report was investigated, the report was substantiated, and the case was closed. Close to 1,500 children died as a result of abuse or neglect. The most endangered are the youngest: more than three-quarters of children killed were under age 4.

CAPTA's Basic State Grants help states protect children. The nation's child welfare system has long been stretched beyond capacity. Federal officials have repeatedly cited states for certain deficiencies: significant numbers of children suffering abuse or neglect more than once in a six-month period; caseworkers not visiting children often enough to assess needs; and failure to provide promised medical and mental health services. Funding CAPTA state grants at \$84 million would enable state child protective services to expand post-investigative services for child victims, shorten the time to the delivery of services, and increase services to other at-risk families

Community-Based Prevention Grants: For every federal dollar spent on foster care and adoption subsidies, we spend less than 13 cents in federal child welfare funding on preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. CAPTA's Prevention Grants help states to develop community-based prevention services, including parenting education, home visiting services, and respite care. We spend billions of dollars every year on foster care to protect the children who have been the most seriously injured; we can do a much better job at protecting children before the situation has deteriorated to a point that we have no other choice than to remove them from their homes.

Funding CAPTA prevention grants at \$80 million would help communities support proven, cost-effective approaches to preventing child abuse and neglect. Community services to prevent child abuse are far less costly than the damage inflicted on children from abuse and neglect. A GAO evaluation of child abuse prevention efforts found "total federal costs of providing prevention programs for low-income populations were nearly offset after four years."

Discretionary Research and Demonstration Grants: Current funding levels short-change community efforts to develop innovative programs to serve children and families and to improve our knowledge about child maltreatment. We ask Congress to approve the President's proposed increase of \$10 million to support home visitation programs. We urge that these funds be available to promote an array of research- and evidence-based home visitation models that enable communities to provide the most appropriate services suited to the families needing them.

Research evidence supports the value of a range of early childhood home visitation models using professionals, nurses, paraprofessionals, and trained volunteers from the community in improving parenting and family health and preventing child maltreatment. The results from various randomized trials evaluating different home visitation models, using trained paraprofessionals, nurses and other professionals, show positive effects in parenting, child abuse and neglect, birth outcomes, and health care. Funding research and program innovations at the level of \$36 million would provide support for a diversity of home visitation models, as well as the field-initiated research, training, technical assistance, and data collection also authorized by CAPTA out of this money.

Your dedicated support for programs to protect children and to prevent child abuse and neglect can help to focus constructive public policies on these important issues. We hope we can count on your leadership to promote these increased funding levels for CAPTA basic state grants and CAPTA community-based prevention grants, and provide the resources for research and innovation necessary to stem the tide of child maltreatment. Again, many thanks for your advocacy on behalf of children.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Alliance for Children and Families
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Humane Association
 American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
 American Psychological Association
 Association of University Centers on Disabilities
 Child Welfare League of America
 Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
 Easter Seals
 First Star
 IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA)
 Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
 National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
 National Association of Counsel for Children
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Children's Advocacy Center
 National Education Association
 National Exchange Club Foundation
 National PTA
 National Respite Coalition
 Parents as Teachers National Center
 Prevent Child Abuse America
 Stop It Now!
 Voices for America's Children

State and Local Organizations

Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network
 Children's Trust Fund of Alabama
 United cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley, Inc. (Alabama)
 Children's Residential Services Certificate Program/University of Alaska Anchorage
 Healthy Families Arizona
 Prevent Child Abuse Arizona
 Southwest Human Development, Inc. (Arizona)
 Arkansas Children's Trust Fund
 Partners for Inclusive Communities (Arkansas)
 California Respite Association
 Prevent Child Abuse California
 Children's Trust Fund (Connecticut)
 Connecticut Lifespan Respite Coalition
 Family to Family Health Information Network (Connecticut)
 District of Columbia Children's Trust Fund
 Healthy Start Healthy Families (District of Columbia)
 Florida Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
 Healthy Families Orange (Florida)
 Georgia Children's Trust Fund Commission
 Georgia Family Connection Partnership
 Georgia's Healthy Families Program
 Prevent Child Abuse Georgia
 Voices for Georgia's Children
 Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii
 Idaho Children's Trust Fund
 Child Abuse Council (Illinois)
 Crisis Nursery Coalition of Illinois
 Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
 South Chicago Parents & Friends, Inc. (Illinois)
 Area Five Agency on Aging and Community Services, Inc. (Indiana)
 Blue River Services, Inc. Healthy Families (Indiana)
 Daviess-Martin Healthy Families (Indiana)
 Healthy Families Elkhart County (Indiana)
 Healthy Families at Mental Health America of Lake County (Indiana)
 Rauch, Inc./Healthy Families Floyd County (Indiana)
 Wayne County Healthy Families (Indiana)
 Polk County Healthy Families (Iowa)
 Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
 Kansas Children's Service League
 Kansas Respite Coalition
 Respite Outreach Care for Kansans Organization, Inc.
 Family & Children First (Kentucky)
 Maine Children's Trust Fund
 Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund
 Muskegon Healthy Families Program (Michigan)
 Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
 15th Judicial Circuit CASA (Missouri)
 Citizens for Missouri's Children
 Missouri Children's Trust Fund
 Nova Center, Inc. (Missouri)
 Prevent Child Abuse Missouri
 Synergy Services, Inc. (Missouri)
 Healthy Families Morris County (New Jersey)
 Healthy Families New Jersey
 Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey

The Parenting Place of The Exchange Clubs (North Carolina)
Children's Aid Society at The Lehman Center (Pennsylvania)
Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island
Child Abuse Prevention Association (South Carolina)
Foothills Alliance, Prevent Child Abuse (South Carolina)
Heritage Community Services (South Carolina)
The South Carolina Respite Coalition
Nashville Child Advocacy Center (Tennessee)
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee
Tennessee Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers
Early Intervention Research Institute (Utah)
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
Vermont Children's Trust Foundation
Child Development Resources (Virginia)
Healthy Families Northern Shenandoah Valley (Virginia)
Healthy Families Virginia
Hopewell-Prince George Healthy Families (Virginia)
Mary's Family (Virginia)
New River Valley CARES (Virginia)
Northern Virginia Family Service
Partnership for People with Disabilities (Virginia)
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads (Virginia)
Partners in Community Outreach (West Virginia)
Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
TEAM for West Virginia Children
Children's Hospital and Health System (Wisconsin)
Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin
Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund