

[Date]

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McCrery
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Ranking Member
House Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McDermott
Chairman
Subcommittee on Income Security and
Family Support
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Weller
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Income Security and
Family Support
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sens. Baucus and Grassley and Reps. Rangel, McCrery, Miller, McKeon, McDermott and Weller:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for the Kinship Caregiver Support Act, bipartisan legislation introduced this year in both the House (H.R. 2188) and the Senate (S. 661), which would provide assistance to grandparents and other relatives who have stepped in to care for children when their parents cannot, including relatives who become the legal guardians of children so they can exit foster care. We urge you to enact this legislation this year.

Approximately 2.5 million children are being cared for by grandparents and other relatives without either parent present. One in five of these children live below the poverty line and many of the caregivers live on fixed incomes, but only about 30% receive any public financial support.

Of the estimated half-million children currently in foster care in the United States, thousands could exit the system with custody transferred to relatives who are willing to become their legal guardians. Unfortunately, under current federal law the caregivers of these children are likely to lose the financial assistance they received as foster parents to meet the needs of the child if they become legal guardians and provide permanent homes for the children.

The Kinship Caregiver Support Act addresses several existing barriers for grandparents and other relatives raising children. It helps different groups of children in different ways by:

- Requiring notice to be given to relatives of children who enter foster care and authorizing states to establish separate licensing standards and regulations for relative foster parents, while still maintaining safety standards for children;

- Establishing a Kinship Navigator Program to help relative caregivers navigate their way through available programs and services; and
- Continuing federal financial assistance for foster children when relatives who have been caring for them in foster care choose to become their legal guardians.

Children in the nation's foster care system, as well as those whose grandparents or other relatives stepped in to prevent foster care placement, need the support and stability that can be found in the home of a loving relative. Such stability and security is a necessary prerequisite for emotional and educational development.

The undersigned organizations believe that the Kinship Caregiver Support Act is an important step toward these worthwhile goals. We look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

Respectfully yours,

National Organizations

AARP
 Alliance for Children and Families
 American Association of Children's Residential Centers
 American Humane Association
 Association on American Indian Affairs
 Center for Law and Social Policy
 Child Welfare League of America
 Children's Defense Fund
 Children's Rights
 Easter Seals
 First Focus
 Foster Care Alumni of America
 Fostering Results
 Generations United
 GrandFamilies of America
 Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now
 National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
 National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
 National Association of Counties
 National Association of County Human Services Administrators
 National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
 The National CASA Association
 National Center on Caregiving at FCA
 National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights
 National Congress of American Indians
 National Foster Parent Association
 National Indian Child Welfare Association
 National Network for Youth
 National Respite Coalition
 North American Council on Adoptable Children
 United Neighborhood Centers of America
 Voice for Adoption
 Voices for America's Children

Alabama

Children's Aid Society (Birmingham, AL)
 Gateway (Birmingham, AL)

Alaska

Volunteers of America Alaska – Grandfamilies Network Project (Anchorage, AK)

Arizona

Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona, Inc. (Tucson, AZ)
 Children's Action Alliance (Phoenix, AZ)
 Child and Family Resources, Inc. (Tucson, AZ)
 Child Crisis Center (Mesa, AZ)
 Christian Family Care Agency, Inc. (Phoenix, AZ)
 Fresh Start Community Services (Glendale, AZ)
 Grandparents United for Children's Rights (Phoenix, AZ)
 Human Resource Training, Inc. (Phoenix, AZ)
 Seeds of Hope (Casa Grande, AZ)
 Southwest Human Development, Inc. (Phoenix, AZ)

Arkansas

Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind (Kavanaugh, AR)
 Family Service Agency (North Little Rock, AR)

California

ACTS for Children (Bloomington, CA)
 Advanced Education Services (Colton, CA)
 The Alliance for Children's Rights (Los Angeles, CA)
 The California Alliance for Child and Family Services (Sacramento, CA)
 City & County of San Francisco (San Francisco, CA)

County Welfare Directors Association of
California (Sacramento, CA)
Five Acres (Altadena, CA)
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services
(Pasadena, CA)
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles (Los
Angeles, CA)
Kinship Center (Salinas, CA)
Monterey County Department of Social and
Employment Services (Salinas, CA)
Nuevo Amanecer Latino Children's Services (Los
Angeles, CA)
Seneca Center for Children and Families (San
Leandro, CA)
Triad Family Services (Sacramento, CA)
Trinity Youth Services (Colton, CA)

Colorado

Catholic Charities (Denver, CO)
Colorado Association of Family and Children's
Agencies (Denver, CO)

Connecticut

Connecticut Foster Parent Association (Hartford,
CT)

Delaware

GrandParents United DE, Inc. (Hockessin, DE)

District of Columbia

Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc. (Washington, D.C.)

Florida

Family Service Centers, Inc. (Clearwater, FL)
Family Services of Metro Orlando (Orlando, FL)
The Florida Center for Child and Family
Development (Sarasota, FL)
Florida Kinship Center (Tampa, FL)

Georgia

Families First (Atlanta, GA)
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for
Children (Atlanta, GA)

Hawaii

Catholic Charities Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)
Foster Family Programs of Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)
Partners in Development Foundation (Honolulu,
HI)

Idaho

Eastern Idaho Grandparents Raising
Grandchildren (Idaho Falls, ID)
Idaho Children's Trust Fund/Prevent Child Abuse
Idaho (Boise, ID)
Idaho KINCARE Coalition (Boise, ID)

Treasure Valley Grandparents as Parents (Boise,
ID)

Illinois

The Baby Fold (Normal, IL)
Bethany for Children & Families (Moline, IL)
The Chicago Children's Advocacy Center
(Chicago, IL)
Child Care Association of Illinois (Springfield, IL)
Methodist Youth Services, Inc. (Chicago, IL)
Metropolitan Family Services (Chicago, IL)
Northwestern University Settlement Association
(Chicago, IL)

Indiana

Children's Bureau, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN)
Family and Children's Center (Mishawaka, IN)
IARCCA - An Association of Children & Family
Services (Indianapolis, IN)
White's Residential and Family Services
(Wabash, IN)

Iowa

Coalition for Family and Children's Services in
Iowa (Des Moines, IA)
Four Oaks (Cedar Rapids, IA)
Horizons, A Family Service Alliance (Cedar
Rapids, IA)
Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association
(Cedar Rapids, IA)
Iowa KidsNet (Des Moines, IA)
Iowa Respite and Crisis Care Coalition
(Urbandale, IA)
Lutheran Services in Iowa (Des Moines, IA)

Kansas

Rainbows United, Inc. (Wichita, KS)

Kentucky

Children's Alliance (Frankfort, KY)
Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C)
(Louisville, KY)
G.L.U.E. (Giving Love Understanding and
Encouragement) (Louisville, KY)
Jewish Family and Vocational Service (Louisville,
KY)
Open Arms Support Group (Elizabethtown, KY)

Louisiana

Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge (Baton
Rouge, LA)

Maine

Angel on My Shoulder (North Berwick, ME)

Maryland

The Children's Guild, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)
MAC Incorporated Area Agency on Aging
(Salisbury, MD)
Seton Center (Princess Anne, MD)
Solutions For Children And Caregivers of
Maryland (Crofton, MD)

Massachusetts

Children's League of Massachusetts (Boston,
MA)

Michigan

Catholic Social Services of Oakland County
(Pontiac, MI)
Child & Family Services of Northwestern
Michigan (Traverse City, MI)
Family and Children's Services (Midland, MI)
Starr Commonwealth (Albion, MI)

Minnesota

The City, Inc. (Minneapolis, MN)
Family & Children's Service (Minneapolis, MN)
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies (St.
Paul, MN)
Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association (St.
Paul, MN)
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
(Minneapolis, MN)
St. David's Child Development & Family Services
(Minnetonka, MN)

Mississippi

Faith in Action Helping Hands (Petal, MS)
Pinebelt Association for Families (Petal, MS)

Missouri

Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Inc.
(Kansas City, MO)
Child Abuse Prevention Association
(Independence, MO)
Child Advocacy Services Center, Inc./d.b.a. The
Children's Place (Kansas City, MO)
Cornerstones of Care (Kansas City, MO)
Crittenton Children's Center (Kansas City, MO)
Epworth Children & Family Services (Webster
Groves, MO)
Family Advocates, LLC (Kansas City, MO)
Lutheran Family and Children's Services of
Missouri (St. Louis, MO)
Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association
(Independence, MO)
Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies
(Jefferson City, MO)
Partnership for Children (Kansas City, MO)

Youth In Need (St. Charles, MO)

Montana

Indian Child Welfare and Family Resource
Center (Helena, MT)

Nebraska

Heartland Family Service (Omaha, NE)

Nevada

Child Focus (Las Vegas, NV)
Mountain Circle Family Services, Inc. (Reno,
NV)
Reaching Our Community's Kids (R.O.C.K.) (Las
Vegas, NV)
Sierra Association of Foster Families (Reno, NV)

New Hampshire

Children's Alliance of New Hampshire (Concord,
NH)

New Jersey

The Bridge, Inc. (Caldwell, NJ)
Caregivers of New Jersey (Bordentown, NJ)
Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc.
(Paramus, NJ)
Family Service Association of New Jersey
(Ewing, NJ)
Morristown Neighborhood House Association
(Morristown, NJ)
Robins' Nest, Inc. (Glassboro, NJ)

New Mexico

Fourth Judicial CASA (Las Vegas, NM)
Outcomes, Inc. (Albuquerque, NM)

New York

Andrus Children's Center (Yonkers, NY)
Child and Family Services (Buffalo, NY)
City of New York Administration for Children's
Services (New York, NY)
City of New York Department for the Aging
(DFTA) (New York, NY)
Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
(COFCCA) (Albany, NY)
Family Services of Westchester (Port Chester,
NY)
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (New
York, NY)
Hillside Family of Agencies (Rochester, NY)
Hispanic Senior Action Council (New York, NY)

Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, Inc.
(New York, NY)
Liberty Resources, Inc. (Syracuse, NY)
New York State Association of Family Service
Agencies (Albany, NY)
New York State Office of Children and Family
Services (Rensselaer, NY)
Parsons Child and Family Center (Albany, NY)
Presbyterian Senior Services (New York, NY)
St. Matthew's & St. Timothy's Neighborhood
Center, Inc. (New York, NY)

North Carolina

Children and Family Services Association
(Raleigh, NC)
Family Service of the Piedmont (Jamestown, NC)

Ohio

Alliance of Child Caring Service Providers
(Cleveland, OH)
Ashtabula County Children Services Board
(Ashtabula, OH)
Belmont County Department of Job and Family
Services (St. Clairsville, OH)
The Center for Community Solutions (Columbus,
OH)
Champaign County Department of Job and
Family Services (Urbana, OH)
Child Care Resource Center (Lorain, OH)
Clinton County Job and Family Services
(Wilmington, OH)
Contact Center, Inc. (Cincinnati, OH)
Coshocton County Job and Family Services
(Coshocton, OH)
County Commissioners Association of Ohio
(Columbus, OH)
Cuyahoga County Department of Children and
Family Services (Cleveland, OH)
Defiance County Job and Family Services
(Defiance, OH)
Delaware County Job and Family Services
(Delaware, OH)
Hamilton County Department of Job and Family
Services (Cincinnati, OH)
Lucas County Children Services Board (Toledo,
OH)
Medina County Job and Family Services
(Medina, OH)
Muskingum County Children Services
(Zanesville, OH)
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio (NAMI
Ohio) (Columbus, OH)
National Council of Jewish Women-Ohio (Orange
Village, OH)
Ohio Empowerment Coalition (Cincinnati, OH)
Ohio Grandparent/Kinship Coalition (Akron, OH)
Perry County Children's Services Board
(New Lexington, OH)
Personal & Family Counseling Services (New
Philadelphia, OH)
Preble Job & Family Services, Children Services
Division (Eaton, OH)

Public Children Services Association of Ohio
(Columbus, OH)
Richland County Children Services (Mansfield,
OH)
Statewide Kinship Caregiver Advisory Board
(Columbus, OH)
Summit County Children Services (Akron, OH)
Trumbull County Children Services (Warren, OH)
Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services (New
Philadelphia, OH)
Voices for Ohio's Children (Cleveland, OH)
Washington County Children Services Board
(Marietta, OH)
Williams County Job & Family Services (Bryan,
OH)

Oregon

St. Mary's Home for Boys (Beaverton, OR)
Southern Oregon Adolescent Study and
Treatment Center (Grants Pass, OR)

Pennsylvania

Children's Home of Reading (Reading, PA)
Family and Community Service of Delaware
County (Media, PA)
Family Service Association of Bucks County
(Langhorne, PA)
Methodist Services for Children and Families
(Philadelphia, PA)
The NorthShore Community Alliance (Pittsburgh,
PA)
Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association
(Harrisburg, PA)
Philadelphia Society for Services to Children
(Philadelphia, PA)

Rhode Island

RI Council of Resource Providers for Children,
Youth and Families (East Providence, RI)

South Carolina

Miracle Hill Ministries (Greenville, SC)

South Dakota

Grandparents as Parents Support Group (Sioux
Falls, SD)

Tennessee

Goodwill Homes Community Services, Inc.
(Memphis, TN)
Vanderbilt Child and Family Policy Center
(Nashville, TN)

Texas

Arrow Child and Family Ministries (Spring, TX)
Center for Public Policy Priorities (Austin, TX)
Children At Risk (Houston, TX)

DePelchin Children's Center (Houston, TX)

Tamarack Center (Spokane, WA)

Utah

Children's Service Society, Grandfamilies
Program (Salt Lake City, UT)

West Virginia

Embracing Family Caregivers (Fairmont, WV)

Vermont

Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont
(St. Johnsbury, VT)
Vermont Kin as Parents (Winooski, VT)

Wisconsin

St. Rose Youth & Family Center Inc. (Milwaukee,
WI)
Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's
Agencies (Madison, WI)
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc. (Milwaukee, WI)

Virginia

Legal Services of Northern Virginia (Falls Church,
VA)

Wyoming

Wyoming Kinship Advocacy – A Program of
Community Action of Laramie County
(Cheyenne, WY)

Washington

Cascade People's Center Kinship Support Group
(Seattle, WA)
Catholic Family & Child Services (Yakima, WA)
Child and Family Guidance Center (Takoma,
WA)
Childhaven (Seattle, WA)
Children's Home Society (Vancouver, WA)
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
(Chelan/Douglas Co.) (East Wanatchee, WA)
Grandparents Reparenting (Seattle, WA)
Northwest Regional Council, Family Caregiver
Support Program, AAA (Bellingham, WA)
Southeast Youth and Family Services (Seattle,
WA)

For more information and/or to sign on to this letter, contact Melanie McGraw at (202) 429-0400 x18 or kinship@acf-unca.org.