



# Human Services and Education Proposed Platform Changes & Policy Resolutions

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National Association of Counties (NACo)

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1 **HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION**

2  
3 **Proposed Interim Resolution Supporting Full Funding of Title I and Individuals with**  
4 **Disabilities Education Act**

5  
6 **Issue:** For over 50 years, the federal government has significantly underfunded both Title I of the  
7 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,  
8 denying adequate resources to our most at-risk youth.  
9

10 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports legislative efforts to  
11 require Congress to fiscally meet its obligation to fully fund Title I of the Elementary and  
12 Secondary Education Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) over the next  
13 10 years.  
14

15 **Background:** In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed that  
16 directed additional resources to our schools in greatest need. The legislation authorized  
17 additional federal funding to our low-income students (Title I) worth 40 percent of average per-  
18 pupil spending, but this commitment has been perpetually underfunded.  
19

20 In 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed requiring schools to  
21 provide services and supports to students with disabilities and committed the federal government  
22 to paying up to 40 percent of the increased cost of services, but this commitment has never been  
23 fully realized.  
24

25 Our nation’s students and schools have suffered for decades a shortfall of \$55 billion a year from  
26 underfunding of these acts. U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and U.S. Representative  
27 Susie Lee (D-Nev.) introduced legislation, the Keep Our Promise to America’s Children and  
28 Teachers (PACT) Act (S. 1172/H.R. 2315) that would ensure that over 10 years, the federal  
29 government would fulfill its obligation to invest in our most impacted student population. States  
30 and jurisdictions will get financial relief from having to make up this additional funding as IDEA  
31 funding is required despite what federal dollars are appropriated.  
32

33 **Fiscal Impact:** Additional funding to states and jurisdictions to fully fund Title I and IDEA  
34 student population.  
35

36 **Sponsor(s):** Craig Rice, Councilmember, Montgomery County, Md.  
37

38 **Proposed Resolution Supporting Legislation on Early Childhood Development**

39  
40 **Issue:** Children ages birth to 3 need a healthy start consisting of comprehensive, nurturing and  
41 supportive services to help them reach their full potential for success in life.  
42

43 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports legislation that would  
44 protect and increase investments in early childhood development to ensure that needed

1 educational, nutritional and social services are available to children in the critical years of  
2 development between birth and age three.

3  
4 These investments include greater coordination among pre-school programs in schools and  
5 county-run programs such as home visiting programs, child wellness, Head Start, Early Head  
6 Start and quality childcare including the support of the early childhood workforce. Collaboration  
7 with highly trained and motivated partners who build exceptional early childhood ecosystems are  
8 pivotal in providing a generation of young people who enter school ready to learn. By investing  
9 in and demonstrating leadership in these early childhood development programs, we can begin to  
10 bring about successful educational outcomes to fight poverty and reduce inequality across our  
11 nation.

12  
13 **Background:** Research shows birth to 3 is a critical time in a young child’s development.  
14 During that period crucial skills are acquired including cognitive development,  
15 language/communications skills, social and emotional skills along with movement and physical  
16 development. Many low-income families generally lack the ability and knowledge to positively  
17 nurture and stimulate their children, or to afford high quality childcare where those crucial  
18 supports will be provided. This lack of an early preparedness means these children eventually  
19 reach school well-behind their peers and have a difficult if not impossible task of catching up.  
20 With the introduction of supportive services, including educational stimulation, routine health  
21 care, social interaction and more data shows substantially improved outcomes for infants and  
22 toddlers.

23  
24 As our nation continues to grow, it is critical that we seek crucial federal funds for investments to  
25 help all children get the best start in their educational pathways to ensure that they can become  
26 prepared to enjoy a successful quality of life. A strong beginning can yield a successful finish.  
27 NACo believes that increased and continuous federal funding for Early Childhood Initiatives will  
28 allow children to get a healthy start in life and help them develop to their full potential in safe  
29 and nurturing families, schools and communities. Successful and productive citizens will  
30 ultimately be the result of this investment.

31  
32 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural/Impact:** Would provide new federal funds to counties and educational  
33 entities to expand and support early childhood initiatives to benefit birth to 3 children, thus  
34 improving their quality of life.

35  
36 **Sponsor(s):** Brenda Howerton, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Durham County, N.C.; Durham  
37 County, N.C. Board of Commissioners

38  
39 **Proposed Resolution to Update the Thrifty Food Plan Used to Calculate Benefits for the**  
40 **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

41  
42 **Issue:** Serving as the foundation for calculating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
43 (SNAP) benefits, the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
44 (USDA) to portray what a “minimal cost,” nutritionally adequate food plan entails for different  
45 households, reflecting age and gender. It is based on assumptions about dietary needs, actual

1 consumption patterns, and food prices. While benefits are tied to inflation adjustments, the  
2 underlying TFP has not been revised since 2006.

3 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports a thorough review and  
4 updates to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) to account for  
5 the cost of food more accurately, dietary needs, purchasing patterns and regional differences in  
6 food costs, housing and medical care, which affect the purchasing power of Supplemental  
7 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

8 **Fiscal Impact:** Updating the Thrifty Food Plan would increase Supplemental Nutrition  
9 Assistance Program benefits to individuals and families at no cost to county governments. U.S.  
10 Census data reveal that SNAP lifted 3.2 million people, including 1.5 million children, out of  
11 poverty in 2018. Research from the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) on the multiplier  
12 effects of federal spending on low-income programs, such as SNAP, shows that for every \$1 in  
13 SNAP benefits, up to \$2 of economic activity is generated.

14 **Sponsor(s):** John Peters, Supervisor, Mono County, Calif.; County Welfare Directors  
15 Association of California; National Association of County Human Services Administrators  
16 (NACHSA)

17 **Proposed Resolution to Fully Fund and Update the Temporary Assistance for Needy**  
18 **Families (TANF) Program**  
19

20 **Issue:** The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program expires on September  
21 30, 2021.

22 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports a reauthorization of  
23 the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to provide greater state and  
24 county flexibility to create and provide services that support families and help move them off  
25 welfare, including allowing more flexibility in TANF program design, such as allowing higher  
26 education to count as work; realistic time limits on education and allowing states to use TANF  
27 funds to support post-secondary education expenses.

28 NACo urges Congress to retain and enhance state flexibility to use TANF funds for subsidized  
29 employment. Given the demonstrated success of TANF subsidized employment programs,  
30 NACo urges Congress to increase funding for those programs but not at the expense of existing  
31 funding for the TANF block grant or contingency fund. Given that Congress has not increased  
32 the \$16.5 billion TANF appropriation since its enactment in 1996, NACo urges Congress to  
33 ensure that a reauthorization includes a provision increasing TANF funds annually  
34 commensurate with inflation.

35 NACo supports continuing the ability of states to transfer up to ten percent of their TANF block  
36 grant to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) in order to address locally identified needs.  
37 NACo further supports continued ability of states to use TANF for childcare expenses.

1 Additionally, NACo urges transparency regarding the use of TANF and state “maintenance of  
2 effort” (MOE) funds.

3 **Background:** The House Ways and Means Committee has yet to announce its plans for a TANF  
4 reauthorization measure. In past years, the Senate Finance Committee has waited until the House  
5 has drafted its bill.

6 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Cost savings related to long-term impacts on inter-generational  
7 poverty and child well-being.

8 **Sponsor(s):** National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA);  
9 California Welfare Directors Association

### 10 **Proposed Resolution to Guarantee Access to Federal Child Nutrition Programs**

11 **Issue:** Current federal child nutrition programs do not adequately meet the needs of children  
12 experiencing food insecurity, which negatively impacts their learning, physical health and  
13 overall wellbeing.

14 **Proposed Policy:** To remove administrative and resource barriers that block children in  
15 accessing the nutrition they need to thrive, NACo urges Congress to pass legislation that would  
16 guarantee all children have access to breakfast, lunch and snacks at school, in childcare and  
17 during the summer months at no cost. Congress must ensure that Local Educational Agencies  
18 (LEAs) and participating childcare providers receive adequate funding and reimbursement to  
19 implement this program and meet rigorous nutrition standards. We encourage Congress to  
20 additionally promoting partnerships with local agricultural producers to incorporate healthy  
21 ingredients into school meals.

22 **Background:** Some 30 million children participate in the National School Lunch program and  
23 15 million participate in the National School Breakfast Program. However, data suggests that  
24 food insecurity remained pervasive in households with children in the US even before the  
25 economic crisis initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Federal child nutrition programs suffer  
26 from significant gaps that limit access among low-income children during the school year and  
27 the summer.

28 Schools and LEAs may only provide free meals to all enrolled students if they have opted into  
29 the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which requires at least 40% of students in each  
30 school to be categorically eligible for free meals based on participation in other means tested  
31 programs. At non-CEP schools, students must apply for the program, which can pose a  
32 formidable administrative barrier. Additionally, even the “reduced-price” rate represents a  
33 significant strain on resources that low-income children cannot always meet, as the widespread  
34 problem of accumulated “school lunch debt” illustrates. Meanwhile, during the summer, just 17  
35 percent of children who participate in free/reduced price meal programs access nutrition through  
36 the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites, an issue that is especially pronounced in rural  
37 communities. Finally, while 3.6 million children receive meals in childcare and other settings

1 through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the reimbursement rate for providers  
2 remains prohibitively low, particularly for family childcare providers.

3 The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated an issue that has been growing in our nation:  
4 children going to school and childcare each day hungry and unable to properly learn, develop  
5 and play. Restrictive eligibility requirements, administrative barriers and lack of access in the  
6 summer means that families struggling to pay basic expenses are deemed ineligible to receive  
7 assistance. Kids are further reluctant to identify themselves as in need for fear of stigma and  
8 school meal shaming, while schools and LEAs struggle with increased meal debts due to  
9 student's inability to pay and insufficient support from federal partners. Research shows that  
10 children with access to consistent, healthy meals have shown increased school performance,  
11 better attendance rates and have improved health outcomes. Addressing these critical needs  
12 benefits our students, families, teachers and schools.

13 While county governments are not always responsible for funding local school districts and  
14 corresponding nutrition programs, we play a significant role in serving the same population of  
15 children and support increased federal investment in programs that improve child development,  
16 strengthen intersecting systems of support for vulnerable populations and relieve financial  
17 pressure on state and local governments.

18 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Would impact child academic and health wellbeing in both urban  
19 and rural areas both during the school year and over the summer months. Increasing the rate of  
20 reimbursement for school meals to allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to lessen/eliminate  
21 school debt of unpaid meals. Additionally, this resolution would also address economic benefit  
22 of promoting utilization of local agricultural areas to provide fresh healthy ingredients to be  
23 incorporated into school meals.

24 **Sponsor(s):** Craig Rice, Councilmember, Montgomery County, Md., Vice-Chair NACo Human  
25 Services and Education Steering Committee

26 **Proposed Resolution to Enact the American Dream and Promise Act or Similar Legislation**

27  
28 **Issue:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) should support the American Dream and  
29 Promise Act or similar legislation.

30  
31 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) calls upon Congress and the  
32 president to enact the American Dream and Promise Act or similar legislation that, without  
33 imposing costs on counties, would allow certain undocumented immigrants who entered the  
34 country as children and/or for humanitarian reasons to attain legal status if they pass background  
35 checks, demonstrate good moral character and meet education requirements.

36  
37 **Background:** The American Dream and Promise Act offers immigrant status eligibility to two  
38 categories of immigrants who currently lack a path to permanent legal protection in the United  
39 States. These categories include immigrant individuals protected under special humanitarian

1 programs (Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, and Deferred Enforcement Departure, or DED),  
2 as well as individuals known as “dreamers” who have lived in the United States without official  
3 authorization since arriving to the country as minors.

4  
5 If enacted, the legislation would enable TPS and DED holders to apply for green cards – which  
6 they are currently unable to seek – and apply for American citizenship after five years. Meanwhile,  
7 dreamers would have to first apply for “conditional permanent residency,” which they would be  
8 granted in return for passing background checks, demonstrating good moral character and meeting  
9 education requirements.

10 Extending immigrant status eligibility to these two categories of immigrants would enable counties  
11 to better support the health and successful development of all residents, including immigrant  
12 populations.

13  
14 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Counties are responsible for delivering health, human services and  
15 public safety services to all residents, regardless of immigration status, which helps promote the  
16 well-being of all county residents.

17  
18 **Sponsor(s):** Toni Carter, Commissioner, Ramsey County, Minn.

19  
20 **Proposed Resolution Encouraging Congress to Provide the Resources Necessary for**  
21 **Developing and Expanding Arts and Cultural Programming in Counties**

22  
23 **Issue:** The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the only arts funder in America, public or  
24 private, that supports the arts in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Most  
25 counties across the country benefit from an NEA grant. The Challenge America funding category  
26 specifically offers support for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations whose  
27 opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, economics, or disability. The  
28 Consolidated Appropriations Act of FY 2021 provided a \$5.25 million increase to the National  
29 Endowment for the Arts for national grant making as well as waiver language that allows FY  
30 2019 and FY 2020 grants to be used for general operating support, as requested by arts  
31 advocates.

32  
33 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government  
34 to continue to provide the resources necessary for developing and expanding arts and cultural  
35 programming in counties, parishes and boroughs throughout the U.S. NACo supports funding in  
36 Fiscal Year 2022 at \$167.5 million or above for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to  
37 ensure that counties can continue to access these important federal funds. Counties also propose  
38 maintained or increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH),  
39 Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Arts  
40 Education grant program within the U.S. Department of Education.

41  
42 **Background:** The NEA is the only arts funder in America, public or private, that supports the  
43 arts in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Most counties across the country  
44 benefit from an NEA grant. The Challenge America funding category specifically offers support  
45 for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations whose opportunities to experience the  
46 arts are limited by geography, economics, or disability.



1  
2 The ratio of private and other public funds matching every NEA grant dollar will approach 9:1,  
3 far surpassing the required non-federal match of at least 1:1. This generated more than \$500  
4 million in matching support and illustrates why federal support for the arts is uniquely valuable.  
5 The nonprofit arts industry supports 4.13 million jobs in the arts and related industries. The  
6 Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA together calculated the arts and culture sector's  
7 contributions to the gross domestic product at 4.2 percent which amounts to an impressive \$763  
8 billion.

9  
10 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** The NEA's role is to make sure all Americans have access to the  
11 arts no matter where they live. Among the NEA's accomplishments is the growth of arts activity  
12 in areas of the nation that have been underserved, especially in rural and economically  
13 disadvantaged communities.

14  
15 **Sponsor(s):** Toni Carter, Commissioner, Ramsey County, Minn. Vice Chair, NACo Human  
16 Services and Education Steering Committee; Tina Wenger, Councilwoman At-Large, Elkhart  
17 County, Ind.; NACo Arts and Culture Commission

18  
19 **Proposed Resolution to Minimize the Negative Impacts of Immigration Enforcement on**  
20 **Families and Children**

21  
22 **Issue:** The need to carry out enforcement of immigration law in a humane manner that does not  
23 increase reliance on local social safety-net services or increase administrative costs for counties.

24  
25 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to  
26 carry out its enforcement of immigration law in a humane manner that minimizes negative impacts  
27 on families and children, including possible separations, and does not increase reliance on local  
28 social safety-net services or create new demands and administrative costs for counties without  
29 adequate resources and funding from the federal government.

30  
31 **Background:** Collectively, counties invest over \$140 billion annually in health and human  
32 services, playing a major role in providing health care and public assistance to individuals  
33 regardless of immigration status. Across the nation, counties fund and administer federal, state and  
34 local programs that support the health and successful development of all residents, including  
35 immigrant populations. Federal immigration policies that impact families or children can  
36 unintentionally affect the ability of counties to provide supportive services to residents, often  
37 resulting in additional strain to local budgets.

38  
39 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Federal immigration policies may unintentionally affect the ability  
40 of counties to provide supportive services, often resulting in additional strain on level budgets.

41  
42 **Sponsor(s):** Marion Greene, Commissioner, Hennepin County, Minn.

43  
44 **Proposed Resolution to Maintain Current Levels of Legal Migration**

1 **Issue:** The health of our economy and communities and our economic growth as counties depends  
2 on a robust legal immigration system.

3  
4 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports legislative or regulatory  
5 proposals that at least maintain current statutory legal immigration levels and opposes any efforts  
6 that would significantly reduce legal immigration to the United States.

7  
8 **Background:** Immigrant labor and expertise is vital to local economies, industries and agriculture  
9 in most states across the country. Counties have an interest in ensuring that our employers and  
10 industries of all types can reliably hire and retain a qualified and legal workforce that meets their  
11 needs, boosts their competitive advantages and strengthens local economies. Population growth  
12 and economic growth are inextricably linked, and strategies to promote immigration, the  
13 integration of immigrants and citizenship make our communities stronger. The United States has  
14 a unique history of absorbing immigrants and refugees into the fabric of our society to the benefit  
15 of all Americans. The best strategy to reduce illegal immigration is to create a robust legal  
16 immigration system that welcomes and harnesses the human and economic potential of  
17 immigrants.

18  
19 The current administration is working to reverse the following administrative changes, enacted by  
20 the previous administration, that dramatically and harmfully reduced the number of legal  
21 immigrants entering our country:

- 22 • Administrative policies that have drastically reduced asylum and refugee resettlement in  
23 the United States have created heartache and hardship for existing residents.
- 24 • Regulatory proposals that have raised bars to entry for immigrants with desirable skills,  
25 including entrepreneurs, students and leaders in research and technology fields, are  
26 harming our economic competitiveness in an increasingly global marketplace of ideas and  
27 industries.
- 28 • Administrative actions that have led to historic backlogs and delays in the naturalization  
29 process, in visa applications, in our immigration courts and in other immigration benefits  
30 are leaving immigrants and their employers in limbo as they await resolution on  
31 immigration cases.
- 32 • Expanded immigration enforcement initiatives, including increased deportation  
33 proceedings of unauthorized immigrants, de-naturalization investigations of U.S. citizens  
34 and ramped up worksite enforcement is creating significant uncertainty and fear for  
35 immigrants, their families and their employers.
- 36 • Regulatory proposals to eliminate eligibility for fee waivers in the naturalization process  
37 and to expand utilization of public charge policy to render more lower-income immigrants  
38 ineligible for immigration benefits are driving families eligible for services away from  
39 programs for which they are eligible, harming the overall health of our communities.

40  
41 At the administration's direction, Congress has introduced, but not passed, legislation that would  
42 institute a so called "merit-based" system of immigration that would hinder the unification of  
43 families and reduce levels of legal immigration by roughly 50 percent. Family unification has been  
44 one of the primary objectives of our immigration policies, in part because keeping families together  
45 helps promote a stable workforce and communities. This proposal fails to acknowledge the  
46 advantages of families as vital social units to support entrepreneurship, growth in small businesses,

1 and the proposal reverses a bedrock principal of the American dream by discriminating against  
2 immigrants who may arrive with little but can rise through hard work in our society.

3  
4 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** According to the Center for American Progress, immigrants added  
5 an estimated \$2 trillion to the U.S. GDP in 2016. Over the long run, the net fiscal impact of  
6 immigration is positive for state and local governments. From 2011 to 2013, children of  
7 immigrants contributed \$1,700 per person to state and local budgets, and immigrants’  
8 grandchildren contributed another \$1,300. Across three generations, immigrants’ net contribution,  
9 per person, was \$900.<sup>64</sup> The impact of immigration on the wages of U.S.-born individuals is small  
10 but positive over the long run.

11  
12 **Sponsor(s):** John Wilson, Assessor, King County, Wash.

### 13 14 **Proposed Resolution Supporting Two-Generation Efforts to Reduce Poverty**

15  
16 **Issue:** Poverty is a national problem and requires a national solution. In order to combat the  
17 harmful impacts of intergenerational poverty, federal, state and local partners should promote new  
18 methods of addressing these issues.

19  
20 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) encourages the federal  
21 government to pursue policies that support and enable state and local jurisdictions to coordinate a  
22 two-generation approach to combat poverty. Federal efforts to reform public assistance must  
23 recognize that poverty is influenced by national economic factors that are not within the control of  
24 local or state governments, and that local and state governments are best positioned to help their  
25 citizens when federal programs are flexible and support all generations within a family.

26  
27 **Background:** A two-generation approach to supporting families focuses on creating opportunities  
28 for and addressing the needs of children and their parents together. These approaches can be found  
29 along a continuum, with some being child-focused with parent elements, and others being parent-  
30 focused with child elements. Aspects of a two-generation approach include but are not limited to:  
31 early childhood education, child care, asset building, housing, mental health and substance abuse  
32 counseling, access to health care, employment pathways and others.

33  
34 Counties are well-positioned to deploy two-generation programs and many already are. To boost  
35 these efforts, NACo encourages an intentional effort by federal stakeholders to help align and link  
36 systems and funding streams and ensure equity across programs. Additional steps to help  
37 individuals and families access multiple programs at once, rather than needing duplicative  
38 applications, are also encouraged.

39  
40 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** No new funds are being requested.

41  
42 **Sponsor(s):** Debbie Lieberman, Commissioner, Montgomery County, Ohio

### 43 44 **Proposed Resolution to Support the Development of Pilot Programs for Innovative** 45 **Delivery of Federal Social Services Programs that are Offered through Local Governments**

1 **Issue:** Local governments are responsible for delivering several federal health and human services  
2 programs. These crucial social services programs help low-income families buy food, afford utility  
3 payments, and provide job training opportunities. Local governments have separate offices spread  
4 across cities and counties to deliver specific federal programs. This decentralized system is  
5 oftentimes inefficient and overly complicated, leading to lower program enrollment and less  
6 support for vulnerable populations.  
7

8 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the  
9 administration to support legislative and regulatory efforts that would provide additional resources  
10 to create, support the development of, and fund pilot/demonstration programs for innovative  
11 delivery of federal social services and workforce training programs that are offered through local  
12 governments. Further, NACo urges that this funding would go directly to local governments,  
13 which are responsible for operating programs that increase the efficiency of delivery of federal  
14 social services programs through the use and adaptation of technology and centralized community  
15 resource centers, which allow for citizens to apply for several federal social services in a single  
16 location, reducing the burden on the constituents and ensuring cost effective allocation of federal  
17 resources.  
18

19 **Background:** Federal social service programs are crucial forms of support for low-income  
20 families and individuals. These programs offer assistance with the cost of food, housing, utilities,  
21 and offer work force development and training, school readiness, and housing support. These  
22 programs aid women and children, homeless populations, and our nation’s veterans. However,  
23 accessing all of the various federal social service programs can be overly complicated, time-  
24 intensive, and costly. Local governments run these programs in different offices located across  
25 their jurisdiction, making it difficult and costly to access every office, resulting in under enrollment  
26 and low-income or at-risk groups not receiving the benefits they are qualified to receive.  
27

28 Creating centralized program delivery centers allows citizens to easily access many of the  
29 programs of which they qualify. Offering several federal programs in the same office enables  
30 people to reduce their time spent applying for benefits, ensures eligible recipients maximize their  
31 federal benefits, helps beneficiaries save on travel costs and provides significant cost savings to  
32 the local government administering the federal programs because of reduced administrative costs.  
33 Increasing awareness and access of these programs will improve the welfare of qualified  
34 individuals and families. Innovative and consolidated delivery processes will increase federal  
35 program efficiency and help support stronger communities across the United States.  
36

37 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Federal social services programs offer critical support to low-  
38 income families in communities across the United States. Support for innovative program delivery  
39 projects will help more people receive the benefits they qualify for and create a more efficient  
40 delivery system. The development of centralized community resource centers will help citizens  
41 across the country access federal programs and save taxpayer dollars.  
42

43 **Sponsor(s):** Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

44 **Proposed Resolution to Address Sexual Abuse in Families**  
45

1 **Issue:** A need for additional resources and education to prevent sexual abuse in families.  
2

3 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the U.S. Department of  
4 Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Children's  
5 Bureau to support programs, research and monitoring systems that prevent child abuse and  
6 neglect in families while ensuring that children who are victims receive treatment and care.  
7

8 **Background:** Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in families has been in existence all through recorded  
9 history, often occurring generationally. It occurs at every income level and negatively impacts  
10 every aspect of society. Yet despite significant punishment for perpetrators, one in four girls and  
11 one in seven boys are sexually abused within their own family before eighteen. A 2012 study  
12 shows that each CSA victim costs society \$210,000\*. The annual cost of each victim, assuming a  
13 life expectancy of 70 years, is \$3,000. Of that cost, a major portion is the cost to government at  
14 the federal, state and local level. The remaining portion of the cost to society is mostly due to the  
15 loss of productivity and the healthcare of victims of CSA. The estimated average lifetime cost  
16 include \$32,648 in childhood health care costs; \$10,530 in adult medical costs; \$144,360 in  
17 productivity losses; \$7,728 in child welfare costs; \$6,747 in criminal justice costs; and \$7,999 in  
18 special education costs. The estimated average lifetime cost per death is \$1,272,900, including  
19 \$14,100 in medical costs and \$1,258,800 in productivity losses. The total lifetime economic  
20 burden resulting from new cases of fatal and nonfatal child maltreatment in the United States in  
21 2008 is approximately \$124 billion. These are conservative numbers. In sensitivity analysis, the  
22 total burden is estimated to be as large as \$585 billion.  
23

24 CSA causes a lifetime of dramatic and costly emotional and physical issues, including eating  
25 disorders, sleep apnea, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), stress, bi-polar, substance abuse,  
26 including opioid addiction, prostitution, to name a few. Because of false shame and fear of  
27 destroying the family, most familial CSA is unreported and underreported, meaning the  
28 incidence is in fact much higher. Given the unfortunate secrecy in so many families and the  
29 devastating cost to individuals and to society, it only makes sense, from both a humanitarian and  
30 a fiscal standpoint, to prevent sexual abuse in families from happening in the first place.  
31

32 Easy access to online pornography that both perpetuates and stimulates CSA creates even greater  
33 urgency to address this.  
34

35 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Estimated cost to society in the United States is \$137 billion per  
36 year, of which a major portion are costs are the burden of federal, state and local governments.  
37

38 **Sponsor(s):** Todd Devlin, Commissioner, Prairie County, Mont.  
39

### 40 **Proposed Resolution Urging Congress and the Administration to Maintain County Child** 41 **Welfare Flexibility and Funding** 42

43 **Issue:** In February 2018, President Trump signed into law the Family First Prevention Services  
44 Act (FFPSA). The law provides new federal entitlement funding for foster care prevention  
45 services meeting federally-approved best practice benchmarks and creates new federal

1 congregate care requirements that may reduce federal IV-E reimbursement and shift costs to  
2 states and counties.

3 The COVID-19 pandemic made protecting children and families even more challenging. The  
4 shift of resources and attention to the public health emergency slowed FFPSA implementation  
5 planning in many states and counties. Months before the public health emergency was declared,  
6 Congress appropriated \$500 million in December 2019 through the Family First Transition Act  
7 to assist states in planning for FFPSA implementation, but allocating those funds was delayed.  
8 The Transition Act also extended federal IV-E waivers through September 30, 2021.

9 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the U.S. Department of  
10 Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide administrative flexibility in the Family First  
11 Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to minimize the anticipated cost-shifts to states and counties  
12 that will occur by denying FFPSA Title IV-E eligibility to children who would remain eligible  
13 for state or county-funded foster care and adoption assistance.

14 NACo further urges that Congress amend and/or HHS mitigate the law’s proscriptive provisions  
15 intended to reduce the use of congregate care so that states and counties already proceeding with  
16 similar efforts may continue to do so. Due to the impact of COVID-19, NACo urges Congress to  
17 extend the FFPSA implementation deadline at least one additional year to enable state and  
18 county child welfare agencies who have focused on delivering services during COVID and were  
19 delayed in planning FFPSA implementation. Additionally, Congress should extend federal IV-E  
20 waiver authority through September 30, 2024 unless comprehensive child welfare finance reform  
21 that reflects NACo’s priorities is passed and implemented before waivers expire.

22 **Background:** Counties finance and provide services to about 42 percent of the nation’s federal  
23 foster care population and over 53 percent of federal foster care expenditures are in counties with  
24 child welfare responsibilities. County agencies work with individuals and entities in a child’s life  
25 to identify and provide prevention services or, as a last resort, a range of foster care placements  
26 that are in the best interest of the child.

27 **Fiscal Impact:** The FFPSA will shift costs to states and counties unable to meet the congregate  
28 care requirements. Federal IV-E waivers provide states and counties with the flexibility to design  
29 their prevention systems to meet local needs.

30 **Sponsor(s):** National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA);  
31 California Welfare Directors Association

32 **Proposed Resolution to Support Working Families by Permanently Increasing the Earned**  
33 **Income and Child Tax Credits**

34  
35 **Issue:** The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) are important tax  
36 policies supporting working families and their children. Tied to income, the EITC and CTC help  
37 increase employment and earnings. Consequently, the tax credits assist in increasing the  
38 economic independence of low- to middle-income working families.

1 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports legislation to make  
2 permanent the American Rescue Plan Act’s (ARPA; P.L 117-2) increase and expansion of the  
3 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). Those provisions included, but  
4 are not limited to, increasing the EITC and lowering the age of eligibility for single individuals  
5 who are not raising their dependent child, thus increasing the noncustodial parent’s incentive to  
6 work and income for their child; and, reforming the CTC to include, among other provisions,  
7 increasing the credit, providing monthly payments, and making it fully refundable so all families  
8 may benefit from it.

9 **Background:** ARPA’s expansions of the EITC and CTC are only effective for one year. The  
10 EITC is a highly successful anti-poverty program and wage subsidy. In 2018, it benefited more  
11 than 22 million working people and lifted about 5.6 million people above the poverty line. The  
12 ARPA expansion should increase its effectiveness, especially since workers who are not caring  
13 for a child in their homes, including those who help support noncustodial children, have largely  
14 been excluded from the credit until ARPA was enacted into law.

15 The CTC expansion will reduce child poverty in the United States by 45 percent, according to  
16 Columbia University’s Center on Poverty and Social Policy—lifting nearly 5 million children  
17 out of poverty.

18 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** There is no cost to county governments. There are likely savings  
19 to county financial assistance programs and other supports, given the credits’ cost savings related  
20 to long-term impacts on inter-generational poverty and child well-being.

21  
22 **Sponsor(s):** National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA); Joy  
23 Bivens, Deputy County Administrator for Health and Human Services, Franklin County, Ohio;  
24 California Welfare Directors Association

### 25 26 **Proposed Resolution to Support Increased Federal Funding for Civics Education**

27  
28 **Issue:** State and federal resources for civic education have declined over time, negatively  
29 impacting civic knowledge and literacy as well as civic engagement. More robust civics education  
30 can help the next generation of Americans become more engaged and better versed in local  
31 government, supporting communities where residents thrive.

32  
33 **Proposed Policy:** NACo urges Congress to pass legislation increasing funding for federal civics  
34 education grant programs, including but not limited to those that serve state education agencies,  
35 institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, research and education workforce  
36 development.

37  
38 **Background:** Civics education can empower students with the necessary knowledge, skills and  
39 mindsets to engage effectively in the civic and political life of their communities. However, only  
40 a handful of states and the District of Columbia require a full year of civics education. At the  
41 federal level, while we spend approximately \$50 per student per year on STEM fields, we only  
42 spend approximately \$0.05 per student per year on civics. That lack of emphasis is reflected in low  
43 achievement levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP).

1  
2 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Counties in six states directly contribute funding to K-12 schools,  
3 and counties everywhere share a tax base with local school districts. Increased federal resources  
4 for civic education will positively impact county residents without burdening local governments.  
5

6 **Sponsor(s):** Tarryl Clark, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Stearns County, Minn.  
7

## 8 **HEALTH**

9

### 10 **Proposed Resolution on Addressing Toxic Exposure for Veterans**

11  
12 **Issue:** Approximately 3.5 million veterans have been exposed to burn pits that spewed toxic fumes  
13 and carcinogens into the air, but most struggle to prove the direct service connection necessary to  
14 be eligible for VA benefits to cover the associated diseases. The result is a delay in critical medical  
15 care and other supports for former servicemembers, an increase in the workload of resource-  
16 strapped County Veteran Service Officers tasked with connecting veterans to federal benefits, and  
17 the potential to shift the responsibility of providing healthcare and other services to county  
18 systems.

19 **Proposed Policy:** NACo calls for Congress to pass legislation ensuring veterans who served near  
20 burn pits receive VA health coverage and disability benefits for associated medical conditions by  
21 eliminating or easing the direct service connection requirement and investing in additional  
22 research.  
23

24 **Background:** Approximately 3.5 million veterans have been exposed to burn pits that spewed  
25 toxic fumes and carcinogens into the air. Under current law, a veteran who has an illness or  
26 disability must establish a direct service connection in order to be eligible for VA benefits. Direct  
27 service connections means that evidence establishes that a particular injury or disease resulting in  
28 a disability was incurred while in service in the Armed Forces. For veterans exposed to burn pits,  
29 this means they would need to provide medical evidence of a current disease or disability, provide  
30 personal or other evidence of in-service physical presence near a specific burn pit or exposure to  
31 specific toxins or substance and provide evidence of a link between the disability or illness and  
32 exposure. Upon completion of these steps, the VA determines if there is enough evidence to  
33 provide a medical exam and continue with the disability compensation claim. Therefore, it is  
34 currently the veteran's responsibility to provide their illness or disability is directly connected to  
35 burn pit exposure. As a result, after 19 years of combat in the Middle East, the VA is still denying  
36 close to 80 percent of claims from vets related to exposure to burn pits.  
37

38 Not only does the direct service connection for burn pit exposure delay critical medical care for  
39 former servicemembers suffering, it also has the potential to shift the costs of health care and other  
40 services to county systems. Additionally, the burdensome process of direct service connection may  
41 increase the workload County Veteran Service Officers helping veterans access a range of service-  
42 connected federal benefits. Because these offices are almost entirely funded by counties, they often  
43 face resource challenges—particularly in areas with high demand or in counties serving veterans  
44 in rural areas. Streamlining the benefit process associated with toxic exposure can free up time and  
45 resources for CVSOs to serve additional veterans in our communities.



1  
2 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Ensuring access to VA coverage and disability benefits for burn pit  
3 exposure will mean additional federal resources for county residents, potentially offsetting county  
4 expenses. This could free up resources for rural CVSOs, which in particular can face challenges  
5 in serving the entire population of veterans.  
6

7 **Sponsor(s):** Trista MatasCastillo, Commissioner, Ramsey County, Minn.; Vaughn Begick,  
8 Commissioner, Bay County, Mich.  
9

## 10 TELECOMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY 11

### 12 **Proposed Resolution to Support Federal Solutions to the “Homework Gap”** 13

14 **Issue:** Given the ever-increasing need for digital connectivity for children to successfully  
15 complete their schoolwork, the “homework gap” is leading inequities in education in counties  
16 across America, which negatively impacts child development, the success of our economies and  
17 the quality of living in our communities.

18 **Proposed Policy:** To address internet affordability and adoption issues in K-12 education known  
19 as the “homework gap,” NACo urges Congress to establish a permanent program providing high  
20 quality, subsidized and discounted internet and computer access to low-income K-12 students  
21 through a shared cost formula spread between providers, families, and the federal government.

22 **Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the long-standing problem of the  
23 “homework gap,” which refers to the divide between children who have home broadband access  
24 and those who lack it, impacting their ability to complete schoolwork at home or participate in  
25 digital learning. Impacting an estimated 30 percent of public K-12 students, the homework gap is  
26 especially pronounced in rural areas and for low-income students. This inequity exacerbates  
27 existing educational disparities facing underserved communities and harms the learning  
28 outcomes of children in counties across the nation.

29 **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** The homework gap impacts students in both rural and urban  
30 communities, as many rural and urban underserved communities lack adequate access to  
31 broadband infrastructure, competitive broadband prices, and the ability to afford devices at  
32 home. However, rural counties are especially impacted by the digital divide and have  
33 consistently lower levels of broadband adoption. A federal program would improve learning  
34 outcomes for underserved children in both rural and urban counties without adding additional  
35 fiscal burden to local school districts or county governments.

36 **Sponsor(s):** Terry Burroughs, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Okeechobee County, Fla.; Tarryl  
37 Clark, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Stearns County, Minn.; John Peters, Supervisor, Mono  
38 County, Calif.; Paul Sachs, Director, Planning and Performance, Ottawa County, Mich.  
39  
40

1       **Proposed Resolution to Support a Permanent Federal Broadband Assistance Program**

2

3       **Issue:** The digital divide disproportionately impacts low-income households, who due to  
4       affordability issues have lower rates of technology adoption and access to broadband internet at  
5       home. This disparity creates additional barriers to accessing public benefits, employment  
6       opportunities, digital learning, telehealth services and opportunities for civic engagement,  
7       negatively impacting county economies, health outcomes and quality of life.

8       **Proposed Policy:** NACo urges Congress to establish a permanent program that helps low-  
9       income families afford internet service. A permanent broadband benefit program must include  
10      measures holding Internet Service Providers accountable to increasing access and providing  
11      affordable service to qualifying households. Additionally, such a program should incorporate  
12      relevant data, best practices and any key policy lessons learned during the Federal  
13      Communications Commission’s implementation of the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB)  
14      Program established under the American Rescue Plan Act.

15      **Background:** The digital divide continues to pose particular economic and social harm to low-  
16      income households who, due to cost constraints, cannot afford broadband internet at home. The  
17      COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this problem, but the impact that lack of internet service has  
18      on low-income families extends far beyond the public health crisis. Without sustainable access to  
19      broadband internet, households will continue to face significant barriers to employment, digital  
20      learning and a wide range of public benefit programs and services. While the American Rescue  
21      Plan Act of 2021 has piloted a solution to this problem via the creation of a temporary  
22      Emergency Broadband Benefit program, the digital divide facing low-income households  
23      requires a permanent solution to ensure all county residents are able to thrive.

24      **Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Federal funding to close the digital divide for low-income  
25      households will improve educational, economic and health outcomes for vulnerable county  
26      residents, all of which could lead to financial savings for counties serving as the front line of the  
27      social safety net.

28      **Sponsor(s):** Terry Burroughs, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Okeechobee County, Fla.; Tarryl  
29      Clark, Chair, Board of Commissioners, Stearns County, Minn.; John Peters, Supervisor, Mono  
30      County, Calif.; Paul Sachs, Director, Planning and Performance, Ottawa County, Mich.

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