

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 2, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-230, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
S-221, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

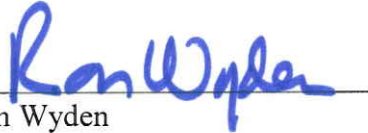
As lead sponsors, cosponsors, and supporters of the Family First Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456/S. 3065) we write to express our profound disappointment and disbelief that, at the last minute, this bipartisan and bicameral child welfare legislation was struck from the 21st Century Cures Act package. This legislation, the Family First Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456/S. 3065), would improve the lives of vulnerable children and families by making historic changes to the foster care system and was the product of nearly two years of bipartisan work and negotiations. It was included in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 34 which was posted to the House Rules Committee website but struck shortly before the Committee met last night.

H.R. 5456/S. 3065 is supported by over 500 state and national organizations including the Children's Defense Fund, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Children's Hospital Association, Lutheran Services in America, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The legislation passed the House in June under suspension and has 25 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate. It has the full support of both the Chairman and Ranking Members of the Committees of jurisdiction. It is fully paid for.

Each year thousands of American children are taken from their homes and placed in foster care. In the midst of an opioid epidemic, those numbers are dramatically rising. H.R. 5456/S. 3065 would allow states to use their federal foster care funds to pay for evidence-based opioid and substance abuse treatment, mental health services and in-home parenting programs so that children can remain at home when safely possible. It would help grandparents who, either on a temporary or permanent basis, become caregivers for children who might otherwise enter foster care. It would also ensure high standards for foster care group homes to ensure that the most vulnerable children get clinical and professional help to address the traumas they have experienced.

We urge you attach it to the Continuing Resolution to ensure its final passage. Every day that passes by without action is a missed opportunity to help the most vulnerable.

Sincerely,



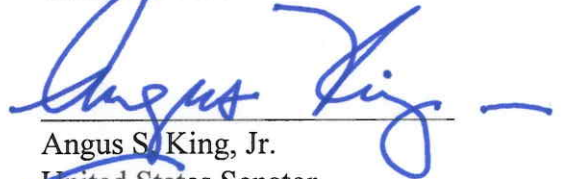
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



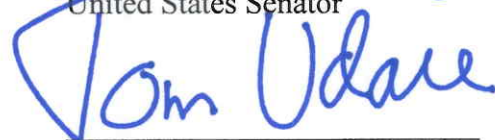
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



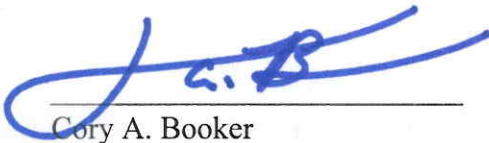
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



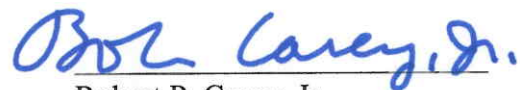
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



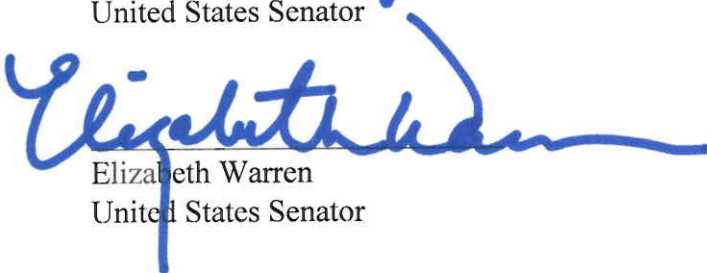
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



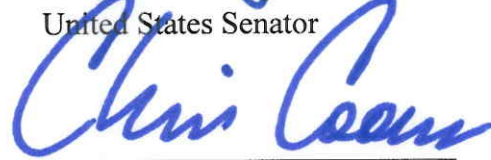
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



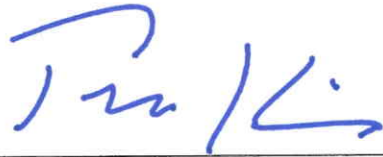
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



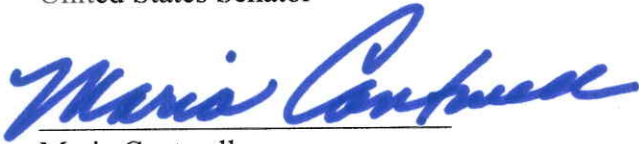
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



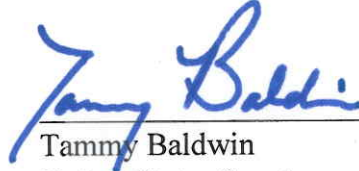
Jack Reed
United States Senator



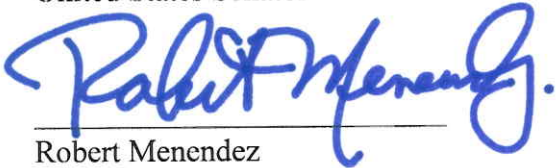
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator