

CWLA Advocates:

Can't make it to this year's **CWLA National Conference**? You can still lend your voice to help children and families. This **Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**, while hundreds of children's advocates visit the Hill to talk to their Members of Congress, you can **join us virtually**.

Read this year's [Legislative Agenda](#) and think about what the children and families in your community need. Then have handy CWLA's "[Hot Topics](#)" our summary documents of requests for Advocacy Day. Email your representatives or call them on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, using the Capitol Switchboard number (202) 224-3121. Tell your Senators and Representatives to make children a national priority by passing the Family-Based Foster Care Services Act to expand therapeutic foster care; support the budget proposal to address the over-use of psychotropic medication for children in foster care; and protect funding that serves vulnerable children and families, and in particular the Social Service Block Grant. See our **Legislative Alert** (below) for more details on these three asks.

Need help identifying and contacting your Senators and Representatives? [Click here](#).

**Tell your friends and colleagues that they too should lend their voices for children and families.**

*Email a friend:*

Dear friend,

Did you know that Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, is going to be the year's largest national advocacy event of the year for child welfare, human service and behavioral health professionals? I'm calling my Senators and Representatives using the Capitol Switchboard number, (202) 224-3121 to tell them to prioritize children and families. Join me and the Child Welfare League of America by learning more on their website [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org) and calling your Congressional representatives too.

*Post a message on Facebook:*

Today is CWLA's Advocacy Day for vulnerable children and families. Join us and hundreds of child welfare advocates by contacting your Senators and Representatives at (202) 224-3121! Ask Congress to: (1) pass the Family-Based Foster Care Services Act, (2) support the proposal to address over-use of psychotropic medication for children in foster care, and (3) protect funding for programs serving vulnerable children and families.

*Spread the word on Twitter:*

Join CWLA's Advocacy Day efforts. Prioritize #children and #families. #CWLAINDC  
Tell Congress: Pass Family-Based Foster Care Services Act #CWLAINDC

Urge your Senators and Reps to improve therapeutic foster care for children with special behavioral needs #CWLAINDC

Tell Congress: Protect funding for programs serving vulnerable #children & #families #CWLAINDC  
SSBG provides \$1.7 billion annually for child welfare and human services. Ask your legislators to protect it! #CWLAINDC

Tell Congress: Support proposal to examine over-use of psychotropic drugs for children in foster care #CWLAINDC

Contact your Senators and Reps to address over-use of psychotropic meds for children in foster care #CWLainDC

Thank your Senators and Reps for extending MIECHV and CHIP! #CWLainDC

Make children and families a national priority! #CWLainDC

## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT**

**4/28/2015**

### **Action Alert: Call Congress to Prioritize Children and Families**

As a part of the CWLA annual conference, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, is the year's largest national advocacy event for child welfare, human service, and behavioral health professionals. Hundreds of professionals are heading to the Hill to talk about policies, programs, and practices that improve the lives of America's vulnerable children and families.

### **ACTION REQUIRED**

Join us! Contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives. To be connected with your representative, dial 202-224-3121.

Need help identifying and contacting your Senators and Representatives? [Click here.](#)

### **MESSAGE**

Congress should prioritize children and families. In this legislative session, (1) pass the Family-Based Foster Care Services Act, (2) support the proposal to address over-use of psychotropic medication for children in foster care, and (3) protect funding for programs serving vulnerable children and families.

### **BACKGROUND**

CWLA has created a forward-looking **Legislative Agenda** that calls for changes in child welfare policy and resources that will have the greatest positive impact on child welfare practice and improving the safety and well-being of America's children. We address a series of critical policy issues including well-being, integrated systems of care, services and supports for older youth, responding to trauma, strengthening the child welfare workforce, enacting comprehensive finance reform, and protecting funding for critical child welfare programs and services.

On Advocacy Day, our message is three-fold to further this agenda.

1. Expand Therapeutic Foster Care by Passing the Family-Based Foster Care Services Act  
(S.429/HR.835)

**Urge improvements in access to therapeutic foster care (TFC):** The Family-Based Foster Care Services Act will improve foster care services for thousands of children with special behavioral needs. The bill clarifies the policies and definition of TFC (therapeutic foster care) in Medicaid so that it is consistent, thereby substantially increasing its accessibility.

2. Support the Proposal to Address Over-use of Psychotropic Medication for Children in Foster Care  
**Urge support for the Administration's proposal to better coordinate Medicaid and child welfare services.** This is a five-year joint project between Medicaid and child welfare for competitive demonstration projects to encourage states to implement evidence-based psychosocial interventions targeting children in the foster care system which will help to serve as an alternative to the current over-reliance on prescribing psychotropic medications.

3. Protect Funding for Programs Serving Vulnerable Children and Families

**Urge protection of current federal funding to support vulnerable children and families, especially SSBG:** Congress is embroiled in a heated debate on the federal budget. Many want to cut deeply into funding for human service programs in an effort to reduce the fiscal deficit. The Social Services Block Grant, SSBG, is threatened, possibly with elimination. It is vital that the resources available through SSBG, \$1.7 billion per year, continue to support child welfare, child protective services and other critical interventions for families and children at risk.