



November 14, 2017

Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman,
US Senate Finance Committee
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member,
US Senate Finance Committee
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

The Child Welfare League of America offers this letter as a restatement of our support for the Strong Families Act (S. 1829), legislation introduced by Senator Grassley and Menendez to reauthorize the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

S. 1829 is bipartisan legislation which provides for a 5-year reauthorization of MIECHV without a harmful state match. As you know, evidence-based home visiting services improve early child health and well-being, school readiness and family economic self-sufficiency, while preventing or reducing child abuse, neglect and preventable injuries, juvenile delinquency and dependence on welfare assistance.

MIECHV is the only dedicated federal funding specifically geared to support and promote evidence-based home visiting services in all 50 states, 6 territories and numerous tribes and tribal organizations to bring about a broad array of important child and family outcomes.

Now in its eighth year of operation, MIECHV is producing important child and family outcomes, including preventing child maltreatment, improving healthy child development, school readiness and long-term academic outcomes and parental employment. In addition to improving the lives of vulnerable families, these outcomes yield significant returns on investments for local communities, states and the federal government in reduced remedial educational expenditures, health care expenses and criminal justice costs.

CWLA strongly supports this bipartisan legislation because it will reauthorize MIECHV for 5-years at its current funding level to provide states, territories and tribes with program stability needed to continue to embed home visiting programs within state systems supporting children and families. We are particularly pleased that the legislation's long-term extension will allow programs the ability to adequately plan to maximize services to children and families. We are also grateful that the legislation does not include provisions harmful to states and tribes, such as a state matching requirement that will likely curtail services in some states for children and families.

MIECHV is essential to the ability of states, territories and tribes to improve the early health and development of children and families across our nation. S. 1829 provides an important path to reauthorize this program so that it continues to achieve important child and family outcomes that strengthen communities and our nation. We urge all members of the Senate Finance Committee to co-sponsor this legislation and work to include it in a bipartisan legislative package that can pass Congress as soon as possible.

Thank you for your leadership for children and families. Please feel free to contact John Sciamanna (jsciamanna@cwla.org) or 410-533-5857 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine James Brown".

Christine James-Brown
President/CEO, Child Welfare League of America

CC: Members Senate Finance Committee