



STATEMENT ON ADMINISTRATION'S DISCRIMINATION ACTIONS

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Child Welfare League of America
Washington D.C.

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The Child Welfare League of America is shocked by the Administration's Friday, November 1, announcement to suspend enforcement of the Obama Administration's rule that prohibits discrimination on the basis of a number of characteristics including gender identity and sexual orientation. This announcement of a new enforcement policy and future notice of proposed rulemaking emphasized a focus on the nation's foster care and adoption systems.

"In seeking to help child welfare agencies, the Administration's actions hit the many children and youth in our nation's foster care system," said Chris James-Brown, President & CEO of the Child Welfare League of America. "There are over 106,000 teens in foster care with more than 24,000 waiting to be adopted. Their needs cannot and should not be driven by an imposed political preference but must be based on that child's best interest."

State child welfare agencies, governed by federal statutes under Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, are directed to make policies and take actions that are in "the best interests" of the child, as mentioned at least 18 separate times in the Title IV-B and Title IV-E federal law. These laws were written to address the care and oversight of children in the custody and care of state and local governments.

The CWLA *National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare* states: "we should work together to protect all children, youth, and families from discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, disability, gender, familial status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, language, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, political beliefs, or citizenship."

We recognize and support the critical and important role that religious-affiliated agencies have played and continue to play in our nation's human services programs. The decision by HHS, however, would offer broad authority to violate the central principle of the nation's child welfare system by not placing the best interest of children and youth first.