



For Immediate Release

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Bipartisan Bill to Support Transformation of Child Welfare Systems Introduced in House and Senate

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Ways and Means Worker and Family Support Subcommittee Chairman Danny K. Davis, and Ranking Member Jackie Walorski today introduced the *Family First Transition Act* to help states transform their child welfare systems and keep more children safely at home, instead of placing them in foster care. This legislation will provide states with the tools to successfully implement the Family First Prevention Services Act which became law last year.

“We’ve seen incredible momentum in states across the country as they prepare to implement last year’s Family First law. Unfortunately, some want to preserve the status quo. So we’re introducing the Family First Transition Act to give states the help they need to transform their systems, which is more effective and less expensive than delaying these changes. This will directly help kids at risk of abuse and neglect, and I’ll work closely with my colleagues to find the resources needed to move this forward,” **Grassley said.**

“Family First ushered in a new era for our nation’s child welfare system aimed at keeping children with their families whenever safely possible,” **Wyden said.** “Our new legislation gives states the resources they need to make sure that goal becomes a reality. Now let’s get the job done for these children and families.”

“As we work to keep children safe and families together, it makes sense to provide states with the support they need to implement the Family First Prevention Services Act,” **Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-Mass.) said.** “Strengthening state-level child welfare programs will reduce the need for foster care and improve outcomes for kids and their parents. I’m grateful to Chairman Davis for his leadership on this matter, and I’m pleased that the Family First Transition Act received such strong bipartisan support from Ways and Means Committee members.”

“Family First will be a game changer for our foster care system when it’s fully implemented. The bipartisan law will keep more American families intact and offer brighter futures for our communities by embracing evidence-based approaches for vulnerable children and parents. It’s crucial we continue to work with states so they can fully embrace these changes, and the Family

First Transition Act, which is being championed by Republican Reps. Jackie Walorski, Brad Wenstrup, Vern Buchanan, and Ron Estes in the Ways and Means Committee, achieves that by giving our states the necessary time and resources to help bring their child welfare programs into the 21st century,” **Ways and Means Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-Texas) said.**

The *Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First)*, signed into law last February, will help keep more children safely with their families and out of foster care. *Family First* supports states in providing evidence-based services to prevent children from entering foster care, encourages states to place children with foster families instead of in group homes and reduces bureaucracy for—and provides help to—relatives so more children can live with extended family if they must be removed from their homes. Grassley and Wyden were original sponsors of the Senate bill in June of 2016.

The *Family First Transition Act* will build on the previous law by:

- Providing insurance to states with child welfare demonstration projects that ended on October 1, 2019, guaranteeing they will not face a large financial shortfall as they transition to the new law;
- Providing one-time funding to all states to help implement *Family First*; and
- Phasing in the *Family First* requirement that 50 percent of spending on foster care prevention be on programs meeting the highest level of evidence (“well supported”), allowing states to receive reimbursement for a broader range of evidence-based services in early years while the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services works to expand its list of qualifying programs.

Full text of the bill can be found [HERE](#).

A summary of the bill can be found [HERE](#).

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