

THE SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

March 13, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

Representing a diverse coalition of groups serving vulnerable populations, the undersigned organizations support continued funding of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). We have strongly opposed previous attempts to cut SSBG and will oppose any efforts to do so in 2015.

SSBG is a major funder for state and local child abuse prevention services, child protective services (CPS) and it supplements services for adoptions and for services to infants, children and youth in foster care. In some states, it is a significant source of local funding for adult protective services.

Congress cut SSBG funding when TANF was enacted into law and when funding was needed for a 1998 transportation bill, with the assumption that at some point it would return to its former level of \$2.8 billion. *SSBG was never restored.* We are concerned that some members may again propose to use SSBG for deficit reduction or to fund specific human services programs. SSBG funding has already been used to cut the deficit and rather than using the funds for specific needs identified at the federal level, the strength of the current program lies in its flexibility to allow state and local governments to determine how best to use the funds to meet local needs.

The champions of SSBG have included the leadership from both parties. In past congresses SSBG has had bipartisan support on both the House Ways and Means committee and the Senate Finance Committee. We hope this will be true again.

SSBG is a vital and flexible funding source helping children, older adults and people with disabilities in a range of ways. The outcome results for SSBG are clear, in 34 states more caseworkers are available to investigate reports of child abuse and because of SSBG 36 states can provide services for victims of domestic violence and victims of elder abuse. It supports services for those adults in jeopardy of entering a nursing home or institution and helps to fill the numerous state and local budget gaps in areas as diverse as senior services, mental health services, and services to people with disabilities. SSBG supports children in need of child care, children and youth who have been abused and neglected, foster youth in need of transitional services, and a range of low income individuals and families. Cutting or further targeting SSBG will inevitably harm vulnerable populations.

The undersigned organizations urge you to protect SSBG.

Sincerely,

The ARC
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association on Health and Disability
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
American Psychological Association
Americans for Democratic Action
Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance
Association of University Centers on Disability
Center for Elder Care and Advanced Illness, Altarum Institute
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Leadership Council
Child Welfare League of America
Coalition on Human Needs
Donaldson Adoption Institute
Easter Seals
Every Child Matters
First Focus Campaign for Children
Foster Care to Success
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Futures Without Violence
Generations United
Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc.
Healthy Teen Network
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
John Burton Foundation
The Kempe Foundation
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America
National Adult Day Services Association
National Adult Protective Services Association
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Counties
National Association of Social Workers
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Council on Aging
National Crittenton Foundation

National Foster Parent Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Respite Coalition
National WIC Association
Prevent Child Abuse America
Ray E Helfer Society
Standing Up for Rural America
Voice for Adoption
Zero To Three
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska
Alaska Children's Trust

California
California Family Resource Center
The Child Abuse Prevention Center
Prevent Child Abuse California

Georgia
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness

Hawaii
Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii

Illinois
Illinois Collaborative for Youth

Indiana
Children First Center Health Families

Kansas
Kansas Children's Service League

Minnesota
Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
Olmstead County

Missouri
Missouri Kids First

Montana
Children & Family Resource Center Inc, dba:The Parenting Place

Nebraska
Southeast District Health Department

New Jersey
Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey

New York
Behavioral Health Services North, Inc

North Carolina
Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina

Oklahoma
Prevent Child Abuse Oklahoma

Rhode Island
Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island

Tennessee
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee

Texas
Lena Pope

Wisconsin
Waupaca County