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Press_Office@finance-rep.senate.gov

MEDIA ADVISORY

Monday, May 19, 2008

- What:** News Conference to announce the introduction of the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act of 2008, and highlight enhanced permanency opportunities for children in foster care
- Where:** 215 Dirksen Building, the hearing room of the Senate Committee on Finance
- When:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008, 11 am (ET)
- Description:** Iowa families from Des Moines, Waverly, Iowa City, Ankeny and Cedar Rapids will be at this Capitol Hill press conference to share their experiences and express their support for legislation that Senator Grassley will introduce to extend and improve the Adoption Incentive Program. This program was created 10 years ago to promote greater permanence for children in foster care by encouraging states to finalize adoptions of children from foster care. It provides incentives for adoptions of children in foster care with special needs. Congress needs to reauthorize the Adoption Incentive Payments Program fund this year.

The bill that Senator Grassley will introduce on Tuesday would increase payments to states for finalizing adoptions for children with special needs, create an additional payment for states that exceed the states's highest rate of all adoptions from foster care, make all children with special needs eligible for federal adoption assistance (current law limits assistance to children removed from very low income families), and establish a new pathway for permanence by allowing states to receive federal reimbursement for payments made to legal relative guardians caring for children who would otherwise be in foster care.

Senator Grassley has long advocated changes to public policy that promote adoption and match children in foster care with safe, permanent and loving families. He co-authored the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which established the Adoption Incentive Program. He authored provisions in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 that increased the federal funding stream for programs designed to help keep troubled families together, improve child support collection and distribution, boost direct child support payments, and promote

responsible fatherhood and health marriages. Senator Grassley also worked to secure federal funding for grants to train judges, attorneys and legal personnel in child welfare cases. He has protected federal funding for Social Services Block Grants that help fund child welfare services. In 2001, as Chairman of the tax-writing committee in the Senate, Senator Grassley sponsored tax incentives that promote adoptions. Also in 2006, Senator Grassley convened the first Finance Committee hearing on child welfare in over a decade and co-authored the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, which included reauthorization of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act, improvements in state child welfare systems and establishment of a monthly caseworker standard.