



national foster care coalition

May 17, 2008

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley,

The National Foster Care Coalition is writing to express its enthusiastic support of the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardian Support Act of 2008.

The National Foster Care Coalition (NFCC) is a diverse consortium of over 40 partner organizations that provides national leadership regarding foster care reform for the almost one million children involved in foster care each year. The Coalition, which includes child welfare organizations, youth-serving agencies, corporations, foundations, and youth advocates, is dedicated to advocating for the needs of these children and their families. NFCC views this Bill as an important step in providing much needed reform which will have long-reaching impact on improving the lives of children and youth in foster care by eliminating obstacles to permanency.

The Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardian Support Act of 2008 will provide the opportunity for states to earn valuable incentives that can be re-invested in services that support the successful adoption of foster children into permanent families.

Guardianship Support for Permanent Relative Caregivers will enable increased numbers of children to be raised by family members who are already invested in their success and will reduce the number of moves that lead to disrupted education and which further traumatize children and youth in foster care. Providing support to relatives who wish to become legal guardians will provide increased continuity for children, when adoption has been determined to not be in the child's best interest.

The de-linking provision of the Bill is long overdue and eliminates the income barriers to permanency for special needs children in the current Title IV-E Adoption Assistance provision. Foster care advocates have sought reform of this unfair and antiquated provision for many years.

On behalf of the National Foster Care Coalition, I wish to thank you for your leadership with this important piece of legislation and for being such a caring steward to the vulnerable children and youth in foster care.

Sincerely,

Kathi M. Crowe

Kathi M. Crowe, Chairwoman
Board of Directors
National Foster Care Coalition