



... because every child needs a permanent, loving, and culturally sensitive family

May 16, 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:

On behalf of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), I would like to thank you for and offer our full support of **the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act of 2008**. We are thankful for your leadership in introducing a bill that will truly help children, youth, and families across this country. NACAC is grateful that the bill includes:

- **Adoption Incentive Program Improvements** — We think that the re-authorization and restructuring of the adoption incentive program will be very valuable. Adjusting the baseline to 2007 will ensure that states are rewarded for continuous improvements in the placement of children with special needs and older children and youth. We are particularly glad to see that states will have a longer period of time to use the incentive funds, which we believe will allow them to support new adoptive families and otherwise help children who have been in foster care. We also support the use of incentive funds to reward states for guardianships.
- **De-Linking Title IV-E from Income Standards for Adoption Assistance** — NACAC has supported de-linking since the late 1980s, and we are thrilled that the bill will expand federal adoption assistance to ensure that all children with special needs have the best possible chance to have a permanent, loving family. As you know, it makes little sense to base a decision on whether to support a child on the income of parents' whose rights have been severed.
- **Title IV-E Guardianship Support for Permanent Relative Caregivers** — Adoption is a wonderful option for children who cannot return to their birth families, but it should not be the only choice. Federally supported guardianship is an important permanency option that will enable thousands of foster children to leave care safely and permanently to live with caring relatives. These placements are safe, stable, and effective at keeping siblings from being separated, while also providing families with the means to meet children's special needs.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership in support of children and youth in this country. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure passage of the bill this year.

Sincerely,

Joe Kroll
Executive Director