

**Wally
Herger**
Congressman

2nd District - California



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 6, 2006

CONTACT: DARIN THACKER
(202) 225-3076

New Law Helps Improve Foster Care

(WASHINGTON D.C.) -- Today, Congressman Herger, chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, joined the non-partisan Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care in applauding new federal funding included in the *Deficit Reduction Act* (P.L. 109-171) to strengthen courts and improve foster care. Herger discusses these important provisions below.

"Over the past few years, the subcommittee I chair has held numerous hearings looking for ways to improve our child protection system and help ensure our nation's most vulnerable citizens find loving, permanent families," Herger stated. "Sadly, every one of the witnesses at these hearings has testified that the current system is ill-equipped to protect these vulnerable children, demonstrating the need for reforms.

"I am pleased that we were able to fund an important new initiative to strengthen courts and improve oversight of our foster care system," continued Herger. "These new funds--a total of \$100 million over five years--are intended to help states improve their child welfare and court systems in order to better protect children in foster care and help secure safe, permanent families for them. I look forward to continuing to work to further strengthen our nation's child protection system, with the goal of improving outcomes for vulnerable children."

The *Deficit Reduction Act* provided \$100 million in additional federal funding over five years to support training for judges, lawyers and other court personnel involved in child welfare proceedings and to encourage better and more timely decision making in child welfare cases. Specifically, the Deficit Reduction Act provides \$10 million per year for State courts to provide training to judges, attorneys and other legal personnel involved in child protection proceedings. Second, it provides another \$10 million per year for State courts to improve data collection, which hopefully will lead to more timely and complete decision-making in these difficult cases.

The law also provided \$200 million in increased funding over the next five years for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs. This program supports state efforts to keep families together to prevent, whenever possible, children from being placed in foster care.

For more information on the *Deficit Reduction Act*, please visit:
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/ResourceKits.asp?section=2233>

For more information, log on to <http://www.house.gov/herger> on the Internet!