

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Senate Committee Report

***Excerpts from the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education,
and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2008***

(Report No. 110-107)

The Committee on Appropriations reports the bill (S. 1710) making appropriations for Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, reports favorably thereon and recommends that the bill do pass.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL

Head Start.—The Committee bill includes \$7,088,571,000 for the Head Start Program. This represents an increase of \$200,000,000 over the 2007 comparable level.

INITIATIVES

TANF Improper Payments.—The Committee recommendation includes an increase of \$6,200,000 for the Administration for Children and Families [ACF] to establish error rates for the temporary assistance to needy families [TANF] and child care programs. Efforts to minimize improper payments in these programs are particularly important given that they total over \$34,000,000,000 in Federal and State funds annually. Previous ACF program integrity efforts have achieved over \$600,000,000 in savings in the Head Start and foster care programs.

TITLE II--DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Appropriations, 2007	\$3,263,678,000
Budget estimate, 2008	2,949,713,000
Committee recommendation	2,949,713,000

The Committee recommends \$2,949,713,000 be made available in fiscal year 2008 for payments to States for child support enforcement and family support programs. The Committee recommendation is the same as the budget request under current law. The Committee also has provided \$1,000,000,000 in advance funding for the first quarter of fiscal year 2009 for the child support enforcement program, the same as the budget request.

These payments support the States' efforts to promote the self-sufficiency and economic security of low-income families. These funds also support efforts to locate non-custodial parents, determine paternity when necessary, and establish and enforce orders of support.

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2007	\$2,161,170,000
Budget estimate, 2008	1,782,000,000
Committee recommendation	2,161,170,000

The Committee recommends \$2,161,170,000 for fiscal year 2008 for the low income home energy assistance program [LIHEAP]. This is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$379,170,000 above the budget request. LIHEAP is made up of two components: the State grant program and a contingency fund.

The Committee recommendation includes \$1,980,000,000 for the State grant program, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$480,000,000 above the budget request. LIHEAP grants are awarded to States, territories, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to assist low-income households in meeting the costs of home energy. States receive great flexibility in how they provide assistance, including direct payments to individuals and vendors and direct provision of fuel. These resources are distributed by formula to these entities as defined by statute, based in part on each State's share of home energy expenditures by low-income households.

The Committee recommends \$181,170,000 for the contingency fund. This is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$100,830,000 below the budget request. The contingency fund may be used to provide assistance to one or more States adversely affected by extreme heat or cold, significant price increases, or other causes of energy-related emergencies.

REFUGEE AND ENTRANT ASSISTANCE

Appropriations, 2007	\$587,847,000
Budget estimate, 2008	655,630,000
Committee recommendation	654,166,000

The Committee recommends \$654,166,000 for refugee and entrant assistance. The recommendation is \$66,319,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$1,464,000 below the budget request for this program.

The refugee and entrant assistance program is designed to assist States in their efforts to assimilate refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and adults and minors who are trafficking victims, into American society as quickly and effectively as possible. The program funds State-administered transitional and medical assistance, the voluntary agency matching grant program, programs for victims of trafficking and torture, employment and social services, targeted assistance, and preventive health. Based on an estimated refugee admission ceiling of 70,000, this appropriation enables States to provide 8 months of cash and medical assistance to eligible refugees and entrants, a variety of social and educational services, as well as foster care for refugee and entrant unaccompanied minors.

In order to carry out the refugee and entrant assistance program, the Committee recommends \$294,021,000 for transitional and medical assistance including State administration and the voluntary agency program; \$9,823,000 for victims of trafficking; \$154,005,000 for social services; \$4,748,000 for preventive health; and \$48,590,000 for targeted assistance.

The Committee is troubled by reports that HHS has been hampered by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice in providing emergency benefits and services to child victims of trafficking. Congress clearly intended in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to allow children to receive assistance regardless of their ability or willingness to participate in an investigation and prosecution of their traffickers. Yet the Committee understands that, in practice, children are often coerced into working with law enforcement because they have contacted HHS for access to services. The Committee expects HHS to use its authority from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to expedite the determination of eligibility of child victims without delays from law enforcement authorities.

For unaccompanied children, pursuant to section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Committee recommends \$133,162,000. Funds provided are for the care and placement of unaccompanied alien children [UAC] in the Office of Refugee Resettlement [ORR].

The Committee notes that \$25,000,000 of the funding increase provided for the UAC program is for shelter needs, partly due to an estimated 12 percent increase in the average length of stay in ORR facilities. The Committee is alarmed by this increase and directs the Department to prepare a report that identifies factors contributing to increased shelter costs and delays in the release of children from ORR care. The report should examine such factors as backlogs in background

checks, issuance of travel documents and delays in repatriations. The report should also propose cost-effective and expedient solutions to remedy the delays that are costing the Department thousands of dollars in shelter care costs per day.

The Committee has not provided the additional funds requested by the administration for expanded background checks. ORR currently performs background checks on the adult to whom the child is released, as well as home visits when deemed necessary. The Committee believes that expanded background checks would contribute to even lengthier delays in getting children released and even longer periods of time in custody.

The Committee directs ORR to use the increase provided to expand the pro bono legal services initiative. The Committee recognizes the need for unaccompanied children to be appropriately represented before immigration courts and is pleased with the progress ORR has made in providing pro bono counsel and support services for these children. The Committee has provided sufficient funding for ORR to increase its efforts for pro bono legal services in all places where UAC are held in and released from Federal custody. The Committee expects ORR to use part of the increase provided to assess the overall impact of the pro bono legal services initiative.

The Committee also recommends \$9,817,000 to treat and assist victims of torture. These funds may also be used to provide training to healthcare providers to enable them to treat the physical and psychological effects of torture.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Appropriations, 2007	\$2,062,081,000
Budget estimate, 2008	2,062,081,000
Committee recommendation	2,062,081,000

The Committee recommends \$2,062,081,000 for the child care and development block grant. This is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request. The child care and development block grant supports grants to States to provide low-income families with financial assistance for child care; for improving the quality and availability of child care; and for establishing or expanding child development programs.

The Committee recommendation continues specific set asides in appropriations language, also included in the budget request, that provide targeted resources to specific policy priorities including \$18,777,370 for the purposes of supporting before and afterschool services, as well as resource and referral programs. This represents the Federal commitment to the activities previously funded under the dependent care block grant. The Committee recommendation sets aside \$267,785,718 for child care quality activities, including \$98,208,000 specifically for an infant care quality initiative. These funds are recommended in addition to the 4 percent quality earmark established in the authorizing legislation. The Committee has provided these additional quality funds because of the considerable research that demonstrates the importance of serving

children in high quality child care settings which include nurturing providers who are educated in child development and adequately compensated.

The Committee recommendation also provides \$9,821,000 for child care research, demonstration and evaluation activities.

The Committee recommendation for resource and referral activities also includes \$982,080 to continue support for a national toll-free hotline that assists families in accessing local information on child care options and that provides consumer education materials. The Committee expects the grantee to monitor the quality of services provided to families as a result of the program.

SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

Appropriations, 2007	\$1,700,000,000
Budget estimate, 2008	1,700,000,000
Committee recommendation	1,700,000,000

The Committee recommends \$1,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 for the social services block grant. The amount is the same as the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and the budget request. The Committee rejects the administration’s proposed bill language to lower the authorized funding level stipulated in section 2003(c) of the Social Security Act to \$1,200,000,000.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES PROGRAMS

Appropriations, 2007	\$8,948,970,000
Budget estimate, 2008	8,250,089,000
Committee recommendation	9,223,832,000

The Committee recommends \$9,223,832,000 for fiscal year 2008 for children and families services programs. The recommendation is \$274,862,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$973,743,000 above the budget request. The recommendation includes \$10,500,000 in transfers available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act.

This appropriation provides funding for programs for children, youth, and families, the developmentally disabled, and Native Americans, as well as Federal administrative costs.

Head Start

The Committee recommends \$7,088,571,000 for Head Start. This amount is \$200,000,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$300,000,000 above the budget request.

The Committee recommendation includes \$1,388,800,000 in advance funding that will become available on October 1, 2008.

Head Start provides comprehensive development services for low-income children and families that emphasize cognitive and language development, socioemotional development, physical and mental health, and parent involvement to enable each child to develop and function at his or her highest potential. At least 10 percent of enrollment opportunities in each State are made available to children with disabilities.

The Committee understands the serious need for additional and expanded Head Start facilities in rural areas and among Native American populations. The Committee believes that the Department could help serve these needy communities by providing minor construction funding, as authorized, in remote Native American communities.

The Committee is aware that the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start [MSHS] program was started in 1969 as a direct response to the unique needs of migrant farm workers and their families. In most States, local childcare resources are not available when migrant families come into a community, especially for infants and toddlers. Without childcare resources, parents have no choice but to take children to the fields where they are exposed to pesticides, hazardous equipment, extreme heat and other health dangers. MSHS programs serve approximately 38,000 children annually, operating in 40 States in every region of the country.

Since 2001, when the Department released a study documenting that only 19 percent of eligible children were able to access MSHS programs, the Committee has requested that the Secretary come forth with a plan for serving a larger proportion of eligible farm worker children. While the Committee was pleased that \$35,000,000 in fiscal year 2005 expansion funds were made available to serve additional migrant children, the Committee continues to be concerned that the needs of at risk migrant and seasonal farmworker children are not being adequately addressed. The Committee continues to look to the Secretary for a plan that describes how adequate systems are being put in place within the Department to ensure that children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers have adequate access to Head Start programs.

The Head Start Bureau shall continue to provide the Committee with the number and cost of buses purchased, by region with Head Start in the annual congressional budget justification.

Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

The Committee recommends \$102,837,000 for the consolidated runaway and homeless youth program. This is \$15,000,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request. This program was reauthorized under the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act of 2003. In this reauthorization a statutory formula was established to distribute funds between the Basic Center Program and the Transitional Living Program.

This program addresses the crisis needs of runaway and homeless youth and their families through support to local and State governments and private agencies. Basic centers and transitional living programs provide services to help address the needs of some of the estimated

1.3 to 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth, many of whom are running away from unsafe or unhealthy living environments. These programs have been proven effective at lessening rates of family conflict and parental abuse, as well as increasing school participation and the employment rates of youth. The Committee notes that basic center grantees serve only a fraction of the youth who run away or are homeless. The Committee has provided funding above the request level to expand the number of basic centers and transitional living grantees so that more at-risk youth can be served.

The Committee is concerned that the Department has not published a report on promising strategies to end youth homelessness, as required by the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act of 2003. The Committee urges the Secretary to release this report to Congress within 6 months of the enactment of this act.

Runaway Youth Prevention Program

The Committee recommends \$20,027,000 for the runaway youth prevention program. This is \$5,000,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request. This is a discretionary grant program open to private nonprofit agencies for the provision of services to runaway, homeless, and street youth. Funds may be used for street-based outreach and education, including treatment, counseling, provision of information, and referrals for these youths, many of whom have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse.

Child Abuse Programs

The Committee recommends \$107,175,000 for child abuse programs. The recommendation is \$11,958,000 above the comparable level for fiscal year 2007 and \$1,600,000 above the budget request. The recommendation includes \$27,007,000 for State grants, \$37,738,000 for discretionary activities, and \$42,430,000 for community-based child abuse prevention.

These programs seek to improve and increase activities at all levels of government which identify, prevent, and treat child abuse and neglect through State grants, technical assistance, research, demonstration, and service improvement.

The Committee has included funds for a nurse home visitation initiative as requested by the administration. These funds will encourage investment of existing Federal, State and local funding streams into evidence-based home visitation programs. The Committee notes that these programs have been shown not only to reduce child abuse and neglect, but also to increase employment, lower criminal activity, improve child health and contribute to child cognitive development.

The Committee expects that when implementing this program, ACF will adhere closely to effective nurse home visitation interventions as they were originally developed and evaluated. ACF should not expand these interventions to integrate other initiatives or services that could dilute the program.

Within the funds provided for child abuse discretionary activities, the Committee includes funding for the following items:

Project	Committee recommendation	Requested by
Boys and Girls Town of Missouri, St. James, MO, to expand services to abused and neglected children	\$500,000	Bond
Catholic Community Services of Juneau, Juneau, AK, to continue operations at its Family Resource Center for child abuse prevention and treatment in Juneau, Alaska	400,000	Stevens
Crisis Nursery of the Ozarks, Springfield, MO, for programming, equipment, services and curriculum	200,000	Bond
Darkness to Light, Charleston, SC, to expand and disseminate the Stewards of Children program in consultation with the CARE House of Dayton, OH	400,000	Brown
Young Women’s Christian Association, Williamsport, PA, for abused and neglected children’s CASA programs	100,000	Specter

Abandoned Infants Assistance

The Committee recommends \$11,835,000 for abandoned infants assistance, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

This program provides grants to public and private nonprofit agencies, State and county child welfare agencies, universities, and community-based organizations to develop, implement, and operate demonstration projects that will prevent the abandonment of infants and young children, especially those impacted by substance abuse and HIV and who are at-risk of being or are currently abandoned. By providing respite care for families and caregivers and assisting abandoned infants and children to reside with their natural families or in foster care.

Child Welfare Services

The Committee recommends \$286,754,000 for child welfare services. This is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

This program helps State public welfare agencies improve their child welfare services with the goal of keeping families together. State services include: preventive intervention so that, if possible, children will not have to be removed from their homes; reunification so that children can return home; and development of alternative placements like foster care or adoption if children cannot remain at home. These services are provided without regard to income.

Child Welfare Training

The Committee recommends \$7,335,000 for child welfare services. This is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

Under section 426, title IV-B of the Social Security Act, discretionary grants are awarded to public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning to develop and improve education/training programs and resources for child welfare service providers. These grants upgrade the skills and qualifications of child welfare workers.

Adoption Opportunities

The Committee recommends \$26,848,000 for adoption opportunities, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

This program eliminates barriers to adoption and helps find permanent homes for children who would benefit by adoption, particularly children with special needs.

Adoption Incentives

The Committee recommends \$9,500,000 for adoption incentives. The recommendation is \$4,500,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$4,000,000 below the budget request.

The purpose of this program is to provide incentive funds to States to encourage an increase in the number of adoptions of children from the public foster care system. The appropriation allows incentive payments to be made for adoptions completed prior to September 30, 2008.

Adoption Awareness

The Committee recommends \$12,674,000 for adoption awareness, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request. This program consists of two activities: the infant adoption awareness training program and the special needs awareness campaign.

The infant adoption awareness training program provides grants to train health centers staff serving pregnant women so that they can inform them about adoption and make referrals on request to adoption agencies. Within the Committee recommendation, \$9,728,000 is available for this purpose.

The special needs adoption campaign supports grants to carry out a national campaign to inform the public about the adoption of children with special needs. The Committee recommendation includes \$2,946,000 to continue this important activity.

Compassion Capital Fund

The Committee recommends \$53,625,000 for the compassion capital fund [CCF], which is \$10,725,000 below the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$21,375,000 below the

budget request. The goal of this program is to help faith-based and community organizations maximize their social impact as they provide services to those most in need. The CCF administers three discretionary grant programs: a demonstration program which provides funding to intermediary organizations to provide training and technical assistance to smaller faith and community-based organizations; a program to fund capacity-building activities; and a program to build the capacity of organizations that combat gang activity and youth violence.

The Committee is concerned that the compassion capital fund has yet to demonstrate its effectiveness and for this reason has not provided funding for new grants. A program assessment ratings tool [PART] review conducted in 2006 gave the program a rating of “Results Not Demonstrated.” In addition, the Committee notes that the program lacks baseline data for its performance measures and therefore it is not possible to determine the CCF’s effectiveness. The Committee understands that ACF is conducting a multi-year evaluation of the program to be completed in 2008. The Committee will consider funding increases for the program when the results of the evaluation are available.

Social Services Research

The Committee recommends \$11,825,000 for social services research. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 is \$11,868,000 and the budget request is \$5,880,000.

The Committee recommendation includes \$6,000,000 in transfers available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act. These funds support research and evaluation projects focusing on finding programs that are cost effective, that increase the economic independence of American families and that contribute to healthy development of children and youth.

The Committee is aware of the dramatic increase in multiracial and multiethnic individuals and families in the United States today that present a unique social and demographic environment for the development of a knowledge base to expand and assess public policies that affect the wellbeing of multiethnic individuals and families. The Committee recommends the agency provide full and fair consideration of research proposals for this purpose.

Within the funds provided for social services research, the Committee includes funding for the following items:

Project	Committee recommendation	Requested by
A+ For Abstinence, Waynesboro, PA, for abstinence education and related services	\$30,000	Specter
Abyssinian Development Corporation, New York, NY, to support and expand youth and family displacement prevention programs	150,000	Clinton, Schumer
Alaska Children’s Services, Anchorage, AK, for its program to serve low income youth in Anchorage, Alaska	250,000	Stevens

Project	Committee recommendation	Requested by
Alaska Statewide Independent Living Council, Inc., Anchorage, AK, to continue and expand the Personal Care Attendant Program and to expand outreach efforts to the disabled living in rural Alaska	200,000	Stevens, Murkowski
Anna Maria College, Paxton, MA, the Molly Bish Center for the Protection of Children and the Elderly	100,000	Kennedy, Kerry
Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA, the Children's AIDS project	210,000	Kennedy, Kerry
Catholic Family Center, Rochester, NY, for kinship care outreach	250,000	Clinton, Schumer
Catholic Social Services, Wilkes-Barre, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Tacoma, WA, for a child care quality initiative	1,000,000	Murray
Children's Home Society of Idaho, Boise, ID, for the Bridge Project to place Idaho children-in-care in foster care	250,000	Craig
City of Chester, Bureau of Health, Chester, PA, for abstinence education and related services	35,000	Specter
Community Partnership for Children, Inc., Silver City, NM, for a child care quality initiative	200,000	Bingaman
Community Services for Children, Inc., Allentown, PA, for early childhood development services	100,000	Specter
Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies, Wethersfield, CT, for the Empowering People for Success (EPS) initiative	400,000	Dodd, Lieberman
Crozer Chester Medical Center, Upland, PA, for abstinence education and related services	35,000	Specter
Family Center of Washington County, Montpelier, VT, to support and expand youth services	500,000	Leahy
Family Service & Childrens Aid Society, Oil City, PA, for abstinence education and related services	30,000	Specter
Fathers and Families Center, Indianapolis, IN, for supportive services for fathers	100,000	Bayh
Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children, West Chester, PA, for programs to provide safe, secure	100,000	Specter

Project	Committee recommendation	Requested by
housing for children through an emergency shelter for families, transitional housing, specialized foster care and adoption programs		
Guidance Center, Ridgeway, PA, for abstinence education and related services	30,000	Specter
Heart Beat, Millerstown, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
Horizons for Homeless Children, Boston, MA, for mentoring, educational, and social development programs	190,000	Kennedy, Kerry
Keystone Central School District, Mill Hall, PA, for abstinence education and related services	40,000	Specter
Keystone Economic Development Corporation, Johnstown, PA, for abstinence education and related services	40,000	Specter
LaSalle University, Philadelphia, PA, for abstinence education and related services	55,000	Specter
Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, for abstinence education and related services	55,000	Specter
My Choice, Inc., Athens, PA, for abstinence education and related services	25,000	Specter
Neighborhood United Against Drugs, Philadelphia, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
New Brighton School District, New Brighton, PA, for abstinence education and related services	35,000	Specter
Northeast Guidance Center, Detroit, MI, for the Family Life Center project	250,000	Levin, Stabenow
Northwest Family Services, Alva, OK, to establish behavioral health services and family counseling programs	100,000	Inhofe
Nueva Esperanza, Philadelphia, PA, for abstinence education and related services	35,000	Specter
Partners for Healthier Tomorrows, Ephrata, PA, for abstinence education and related services	25,000	Specter
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Harrisburg, PA, for domestic violence programs	100,000	Specter
Positively Kids, Las Vegas, NV, to create a program to provide home, respite, and medical day care for severely-	100,000	Reid

Project	Committee recommendation	Requested by
disabled children		
Progressive Believers Ministry, Wynmoor, PA, for abstinence education and related services	30,000	Specter
Real Commitment, Gettysburg, PA, for abstinence education and related services	55,000	Specter
School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
Shepherd's Maternity House, Inc., East Stroudsburg, PA, for abstinence education and related services	30,000	Specter
Southend Community Services, Inc., Hartford, CT, for social outreach services to grandparents raising teenagers	250,000	Dodd, Lieberman
Tuscarora Intermediate Unit, McVeytown, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
Urban Family Council, Philadelphia, PA, for abstinence education and related services	80,000	Specter
Washington Hospital Teen Outreach, Washington, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
Women's Care Center of Erie County, Inc., Erie, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter
York County Human Life Services, York, PA, for abstinence education and related services	45,000	Specter

Developmental Disabilities

The Committee recommends \$190,836,000 for programs administered by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The recommendation is \$20,001,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$20,000,000 above the budget request. Within the funds provided, \$174,116,000 is for carrying out the Developmental Disability Act, and \$16,720,000 is for carrying out the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities [ADD] supports community-based delivery of services which promote the rights of persons of all ages with developmental disabilities. Developmental disability is defined as severe, chronic disability attributed to mental or physical impairments manifested before age 22, which causes substantial limitations in major life activities. The ADD also provides funding for election assistance for individuals with disabilities. This program is for individuals with any type of disability.

Of the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$77,271,000 for State councils. These councils assist each State in promoting the development of a comprehensive, statewide, consumer and family-centered system which provides a coordinated array services for individuals with development disabilities. State councils undertake a range of activities including demonstration of new approaches, program and policy analysis, interagency collaboration and coordination, outreach and training.

The Committee recommends \$42,718,000 for protection and advocacy grants. This formula grant program provides funds to States to establish protection and advocacy systems to protect the legal and human rights of persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving treatment, services, or rehabilitation.

The Committee recommends \$16,720,000 for disabled voter services. Of these funds, \$11,390,000 is to promote disabled voter access, and the remaining \$5,330,000 is for disabled voters protection and advocacy systems. The election assistance for individuals with disabilities program was authorized in the Help America Vote Act of 2002. The program enables grantees to make polling places more accessible and increase participation in the voting process of individuals with disabilities.

The Committee recommends \$15,414,000 for projects of national significance to assist persons with developmental disabilities. This program funds grants and contracts that develop new technologies and demonstrate innovative methods to support the independence, productivity, and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities.

The Committee has included \$2,000,000 within its recommendation for a National Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Center with local projects in as many States as funds permit. This Center will promote leadership by families of children with disabilities in the design and improvement of family-centered and family-controlled systems of family support services, as described in Section 202(b)(2) of the Families of Children with Disabilities Support Act of 2000. The Committee intends these funds to supplement, not supplant existing funding for family support activities within the projects of national significance account.

The Committee recommends \$38,713,000 for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities [UCEDDs], a network of 67 centers that are interdisciplinary education, research and public service units of a university system or are public or nonprofit entities associated with universities. The Centers serve as the major vehicle to translate disability-related research into community practice and to train the next cohort of future professionals who will provide services and supports to an increasingly diverse population of people with disabilities. The Committee recommendation provides an increase of \$5,501,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level, which will fund the existing centers at their authorized level, allow them to receive a modest cost of living adjustment and support additional training for critical and emerging national needs, such as autism spectrum disorder.

Native American Programs

The Committee recommends \$49,332,000 for Native American programs. This is \$5,000,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

The Administration for Native Americans [ANA] assists Indian tribes and Native American organizations in planning and implementing long-term strategies for social and economic development through the funding of direct grants for individual projects, training and technical assistance, and research and demonstration programs.

The Committee is aware that Native American languages are in rapid decline in this country and that only 20 of the nearly 300 languages originally spoken in America are still being used by Native youth today. The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act was passed by Congress last year for the purpose of halting and reversing this alarming trend. In addition to increasing language fluency, Native language immersion programs have additional benefits: evidence suggests they may decrease Native dropout rates and increase educational attainment among Native youth. The Committee is extremely supportive of this effort and has included \$5,000,000 in its recommendation to support Native language immersion and other revitalization programs.

Community Services

The Committee recommends \$735,281,000 for the community services programs. The recommendation is \$40,707,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$710,829,000 above the budget request.

Within the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$670,425,000 for the community services block grant [CSBG], which is \$40,000,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 funding level. The administration did not request funding for this program. These funds are used to make formula grants to States and Indian tribes to provide a wide range of services and activities to alleviate causes of poverty in communities and to assist low-income individuals in becoming self-sufficient.

Several other discretionary programs are funded from this account. Funding for these programs is recommended at the following levels for fiscal year 2008: community economic development, \$32,404,000; individual development accounts, \$24,452,000; and rural community facilities, \$8,000,000.

The Committee is aware that the Government Accountability Office [GAO] has found severe deficiencies in the Office of Community Services' [OCS] oversight of the CSBG. A GAO review found that OCS lost 2 year's worth of key documents relating to State monitoring visits, sent monitoring teams without the necessary financial expertise to States, and did not use performance data or audit findings to target its monitoring resources toward high risk States. The review also found that training and technical assistance funds were used to support Federal staff in OCS and that 60 percent of the funding was used for a variety of grants unrelated to assisting local agencies with problems. The GAO reported OCS has ignored the Committee's direction from the fiscal year 2005 appropriations conference report to implement a training and technical

assistance needs assessment and delivery plan in consultation with CSBG State and local eligible entities.

The Committee believes the Secretary must make better use of funds reserved for training and technical assistance by ensuring that the funds are provided solely to State grantees, local eligible entities, or their State, regional, and national associations for the purpose of expanding their capacity to achieve the purposes of the act effectively. While some share of these resources should be available to assist State and local agencies to correct deficiencies, the primary purpose of such funding should be to build the organizational and programmatic resources needed to reduce poverty and rebuild communities. The Committee believes that this funding is not intended for support of Federal administrative expenses.

The Committee directs that OCS report to the Committee the results of training and technical activities at the end of each grant period. Funding for fiscal year 2008 should support, but not be limited to, a system for rating the quality and effectiveness of training and technical assistance activities and providers; a program of technical assistance for establishing and assessing voluntary local agency benchmarks for high performance; and a system for providing effective responses to needs identified by monitoring or corrective action plans.

Domestic Violence Hotline

The Committee recommends \$3,200,000 for the national domestic violence hotline. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 is \$2,970,000, as is the budget request.

This activity funds the operation of a national, toll-free, 24-hours-a-day telephone hotline to provide information and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Battered Women's Shelters

The Committee recommends \$127,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 for battered women's shelters program. This amount is \$2,269,000 above both the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

These funds support community-based projects which operate shelters and provide related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Emphasis is given to projects which provide counseling, advocacy, and self-help services to victims and their children.

Mentoring Children of Prisoners

The Committee recommends \$49,493,000 for mentoring children of prisoners, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007. The administration requested \$50,000,000 for this activity.

The mentoring children of prisoners program was authorized in 2001 under section 439 of the Social Security Act. The purpose of this program is to keep children connected to a parent in prison in order to increase the chances that the family will come together successfully when the

parent is released. As a group, children of prisoners are less likely than their peers to succeed in school and more likely to become engaged in delinquent behavior.

Independent Living Training Vouchers

The Committee recommends \$46,157,000 for independent living training vouchers, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

These funds will support vouchers of up to \$5,000 for college tuition, or vocational training for individuals who age out of the foster care system so they can be better prepared to live independently and contribute productively to society. Studies have shown that 25,000 youths leave foster care each year at age 18. In addition, only 50 percent will have graduated from high school, whereas 52 percent will be unemployed and 25 percent will be homeless for one or more nights.

Abstinence Education

The Committee recommends \$84,916,000 for community-based abstinence education. This is \$28,484,000 below the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and \$56,248,000 below the administration request. The recommendation includes \$4,500,000 in transfers available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act.

The Committee notes that the Department's recent multi-year, experimentally designed evaluation of abstinence-only education programs funded under title V of the Social Security Act found that they had no effect on the sexual abstinence of youth. The Committee notes that community based abstinence education programs have been required to share the same eight statutory elements as programs funded under title V. In light of this evaluation, the Committee has not provided funding for the administration's proposed increase or for the national abstinence media campaign. The Committee recommendation fully funds current grantees continuation costs.

The Committee firmly supports the goal of delaying sexual activity and preventing teen pregnancy among youth. However, the Committee believes that the Department must encourage further innovation in abstinence education programs in order to develop effective, evidence-based interventions. Until abstinence programs can demonstrate sizeable and lasting impacts, the Committee does not believe that new funding is warranted.

The Committee is disturbed by reports that grantee materials in this program may not contain scientifically accurate information. The Committee has included bill language clarifying that funds provided under this program must be scientifically accurate as required by Federal law.

Faith-Based Center

The Committee recommends \$1,386,000 for the operation of the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. This amount is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request.

Program Administration

The Committee recommends \$197,225,000 for program administration. This is \$9,449,000 above the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and is the same as the budget request.

The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$6,200,000 to expand the agency's improper payments activities to establish error rates for the temporary assistance for needy families [TANF] and child care programs, as well as for foster care administrative costs. The Committee believes that the agency's efforts to minimize improper payments are particularly important given that the TANF and child care programs total approximately \$34,000,000,000 in Federal and State funds annually. The Committee notes that previous ACF program integrity efforts have achieved over \$600,000,000 in savings in Head Start and the foster care program.

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

Appropriations, 2007	\$434,100,000
Budget estimate, 2008	434,100,000
Committee recommendation	434,100,000

The Committee recommends \$434,100,000 for promoting safe and stable families, which is the same as the comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 and the budget request. The promoting safe and stable families program is comprised of \$345,000,000 in capped entitlement funds authorized by the Social Security Act and \$89,100,000 in discretionary appropriations.

Funds available through the promoting safe and stable families program are focused on supporting those activities that can prevent family crises from emerging which might require the temporary or permanent removal of a child from his or her own home. The program provides grants to States, territories, and tribes for provision of four broad categories of services to children and families: (1) family preservation services; (2) time-limited family reunification services; (3) community-based family support services; and (4) adoption promotion and support services. The Child and Family Services Improvement Act (Public Law 109-288) allocated \$40,000,000 for formula grants to States to support monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care and for competitive grants to regional partnerships to address child welfare issues raised by parent or caretaker abuse of methamphetamine or other substance.

PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

Appropriations, 2007	\$4,912,000,000
Budget estimate, 2008	5,067,000,000
Committee recommendation	5,067,000,000

The Committee recommends \$5,067,000,000 for payments to States for foster care and adoption assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2007 is \$4,912,000,000. In addition, the Committee recommendation provides \$1,776,000,000 for an advance appropriation for the first quarter of fiscal year 2009. The Committee recommendation provides the full amount requested under current law.

The foster care program provides Federal reimbursement to States for: Maintenance payments to families and institutions caring for eligible foster children, matched at the Federal medical assistance percentage [FMAP] rate for each State; administration and training costs to pay for the efficient administration of the foster care program; and training of foster care workers and parents.

The adoption assistance program provides funds to States for maintenance costs and the nonrecurring costs of adoption for children with special needs. The goal of this program is to facilitate the placement of hard-to-place children in permanent adoptive homes, and thus prevent long, inappropriate stays in foster care. As in the foster care program, State administrative and training costs are reimbursed under this program.

The independent living program provides services to foster children under 18 and foster youth ages 18-21 to help them make the transition to independent living by engaging in a variety of services including educational assistance, life skills training and health services. States are awarded grants from the annual appropriation proportionate to their share of the number of children in foster care, subject to a matching requirement.

GENERAL PROVISIONS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Committee recommendation includes a provision limited the use of funds for Head Start to pay compensation of an individual in excess of executive level II (sec. 205).