

Senate Appropriations Approves HHS Funding

ON JULY 18, THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS Committee approved the FY 2003 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. At \$134.1 billion for FY 2003, funding is \$5 billion more than the President requested and 7% higher than last year.

Most human service programs received only modest increases or remained at the same funding level as last year. The largest increases include \$7.3 billion for the Department of Education, \$3.7 billion for the National Institutes of Health, and \$3 billion for labor programs.

Funding for key programs that affect children and families who come to the attention of the child welfare system include:

■ Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Families received a \$130 million increase, for a total of \$505 million for FY 2003. Of that total, \$305 million is mandatory funding, and \$200 million is discretionary.

■ Educational and Training

Vouchers for Youth received first-time funding of \$60 million to help young adults leaving the foster care system pay for higher education or vocational training.

■ The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) received a minimal increase of \$201,000 for discretionary grants for research and

See *Appropriations*, page 6

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

Congress has adjourned for its Summer District Work Period—the traditional August recess. Both chambers will return after Labor Day. This is an excellent time to meet with your U.S. Senators and Representatives at home to influence their decisions on important legislation that affects vulnerable children, youth, and their families.

ASK YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE TO:

- Increase child care funding by at least \$11.2 billion. Funding needs to be increased to provide more quality child care services to more families, regardless of whether work requirements are increased in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Maintain fairness in TANF work requirements by expanding vocational education, screening of barriers to employment, and treatment for substance abuse.
- Restore funding for the Social Services Block Grant to \$2.8 billion.

Senate Votes Medicaid, SSBG Increase

ON JULY 31, THE SENATE ADOPTED A \$9 billion Medicaid and social services increase for fiscally strapped states. The amendment, offered by Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) was added to S. 812, the Greater Access to Affordable Pharmaceuticals Act.

Of the \$9 billion, \$6 billion will be distributed to states as a temporary one-year increase in their Medicaid FMAP (Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage) rates. Funds would go to states facing cuts in federal matching rates in FYs 2002 and 2003. The amendment would also temporarily

increase matching grants by 1.35% to all states that maintain their Medicaid eligibility standards at January 1, 2002, levels. The remaining \$3 billion would be made available as a temporary increase to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

States have been severely affected by the recent economic downturn and need immediate and effective fiscal relief. With these temporary increases, states may not be forced to make deeper cuts in health, social services, and education programs. At least 36 states will benefit from the Medicaid increase. **CM**

Senate Finance OKs TANF Reauthorization

ON JUNE 26, THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE approved an amended version of H.R. 4737, the Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility for Kids (WORK) Act of 2002. Drafted by Committee Chair Max Baucus (D-MT), the bill reauthorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for five years and sets the guaranteed funding level for child care services.

The full Senate may consider the committee-passed bill in the fall. The WORK Act differs from the House-passed TANF reauthorization bill (H.R. 4737) most significantly in the level of child care funding and work requirements for TANF recipients.

Summaries of both bills are available on CWLA's website at www.cwla.org/advocacy/tanf.htm.

Child Care Reauthorization Vote Postponed

THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, and Pensions (HELP) Committee has postponed voting on reauthorizing the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) until after Labor Day. A hearing is now set for September 4.

A new draft of the child care bill combines much of two bills introduced earlier this year by Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Ted Kennedy (D-MA). The new bill, S. 2758, would reauthorize the regulations that govern the entire Child Care and Development Fund, providing an authorization of discretionary child care dollars and regulating the mandatory child care funds under TANF.

Key features of S. 2758:

- Authorizes and amends CCDBG, improving early care and education and the quality of care in federal facilities.
- Authorizes \$3.1 billion in discretionary funds in 2003 and such sums as necessary through 2007. CCDBG is now authorized at \$1 billion, but Congress has approved \$2.1 billion each of the last two years.
- Increases the overall quality set-aside from 4% to 10% if mandatory child care funding increases by 15%.
- Creates a 5% set-aside to increase market rates to 85% if mandatory funding increases by 5%.
- Improves data collection.
- Places in statute the current infant and toddler set-aside, and increases funding from the current \$100 million to \$200 million by 2007.
- Requires child care facilities located on federal property to meet health, safety, and quality standards.
- Creates a book-stamp program, funded by the sale of postage stamps, to provide grants to local resource and referral agencies to provide books to promote literacy.
- Creates incentive and state formula grants to establish coordinating councils comprising various early education and child care programs.
- Requires that state plans be submitted as part of the application process, describing performance goals, guidelines for early education programs, linkages between programs and services, and how the state will better coordinate existing services.

- Allows funds to be used to improve quality, evaluate programs, conduct public campaigns, and support voluntary programs such as Parents As Teachers and other quality activities.
- Establishes a bonus fund for states for improvements in quality and outcomes.

House Acts on Drug Prevention Funding

THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government has passed its FY 2003 appropriations bill, which funds key drug prevention programs administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy—including the Drug-Free Communities Program, which helps communities disseminate drug prevention information, and the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which deters youth drug use.

The bill includes

- \$60 million for the Drug-Free Communities program, an increase of \$9.4 million over FY 2002, and the same as the President's FY 2003 budget request;
- \$170 million for the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, \$10 million less than FY 2002 and the President's FY 2003 budget request; and
- language conditioning future funding on evidence of reductions in youth drug use.

A companion version, approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee July 17, includes the same funding levels. The full Senate is expected to vote on this bill in September.



Congress Considers Family Planning Issues

THE HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE Committee held a hearing July 11 on two family planning issues: parental consent and refusal clauses—referred to as the “conscience clauses.”

Representative Kevin Brady (R-TX) reintroduced his legislation, H.R. 4783, to allow states to require parental consent for federally funded family planning prescription drugs and to trump federal guarantees of confidentiality.

Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Representative Michael Bilirakis (R-VA) have introduced legislation (S. 4691 and H.R. 2008) to prevent federal, state, or local governments from “discriminating” against health insurance companies, hospitals, HMOs, and other entities that do not perform, pay for, or refer for abortions, denying federal financial assistance to state or local governments that engage in such “discrimination.”

Both issues pose significant threats for women’s access to reproductive health care.

Committee Approves Family Opportunity Act

ON JULY 10, THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE approved the Family Opportunity Act, S. 321. Introduced by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Ted Kennedy (D-MA), the bill would allow families of children with disabilities to purchase Medicaid coverage on a sliding-scale basis, and allow states to extend Medicaid coverage to children with potentially severe disabilities. The bill could make a significant difference in the health and well-being of children with disabilities, including

adopted children who are not eligible for Title IV-E.

HELP Committee Approves Respite Bill

ON JULY 10, THE SENATE HELP COMMITTEE approved S. 2489, sponsored by Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) to establish a grant program to encourage states to create respite assistance for family members who care for chronically ill or disabled children or adults. The bill would authorize \$90.5 million in FY 2003, rising to \$200 million by FY 2007, including \$500,000 annually for a public or private nonprofit entity to establish a National Resource Center on Lifespan Respite Care.

Senate Appropriations Votes on JJ Funding

THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE completed work on its FY 2003 appropriations bill (S. 2778) on July 18. This bill contains funding for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and juvenile justice (JJ) programs.

The bill level-funds discretionary grants and special emphasis programs at \$58.5 million. These programs were targeted for a \$48.5 million cut in the President’s proposed budget. Similarly, the committee rejected the President’s proposed cut of \$34.5 million in the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, level-funding the program at \$249.5 million. Other JJ areas were level-funded as well, except for a small increase in the Title V Delinquency Prevention Grants program, which went from \$94.8 million to \$95 million.

The full Senate must now approve the bill. The House is expected to act

on its appropriations bill in September.

Finance Passes Health Insurance for Mothers, Newborns

THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON July 11 approved the Mothers and Newborns Health Insurance Act, S. 724. The bill would allow states to provide pregnancy-related care for low-income women under the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Pregnant women whose children qualify for SCHIP could receive coverage themselves for the entire pregnancy, delivery, and 60 days of postpartum services. The bill would cost an estimated \$1.1 billion over 10 years.

CWLA Supports Health Care for Working Families Act

CWLA SENT A LETTER OF SUPPORT ON July 8 to Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) as he introduced S. 2639, the Health Care for Working Families Act. The bill, which would provide health coverage for millions of working Americans and their families, is a significant first step to ensuring all Americans can obtain health insurance for themselves and their children.

Clinton, Landrieu Offer Bills on Older Foster Youth

SENATORS HILLARY CLINTON (D-NY) and Mary Landrieu (D-LA) introduced two bills on June 20 to expand opportunities for young people aging out of foster care.

See *Hill Highlights*, page 6

Points of Interest

Uhlich Releases Teen Gun Survey

UHLICH CHILDREN'S HOME OF CHICAGO, a CWLA member agency, released the results of its *2002 National Teen Gun Survey* June 27. Interviewing more than 1,000 teens nationwide, the survey shows that youth have strong opinions about guns, their accessibility, and community violence. Among the responses,

- 70.8% of youth supported tougher handgun controls;
- 47.7% said metal detectors would not make schools safer;
- 40.9% said they knew someone who had been shot; and
- 36.2% said, if they really wanted to, they could get a handgun.

The survey demonstrates that teens want to and must be heard on issues affecting their security. Launching a multiyear campaign to "Give a Voice to Youth," Uhlich has initiated Hands Without Guns—Chicago, which empowers teenagers to attack the gun violence problem through a variety of methods, including building public awareness.

CWLA Leads Hill Briefing on Education and Training Vouchers

ON JULY 25, CWLA FACILITATED A CONGRESSIONAL staff briefing on education and training vouchers for youth aging out of foster care.

Three former foster youth who are attending college, including CWLA Youth Outreach Coordinator Sinora Dabney, a student at Morgan State University in Baltimore, spoke about their experiences and the importance of providing assistance

to youth facing similar challenges as they transition from foster care to independence and adulthood.

CWLA Government Affairs Associate Tim Briceland-Betts moderated the discussion. Pam Day, CWLA Director of Child Welfare Services, summarized the findings of a new report published by CWLA and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). The report, *Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care: A National Collaboration*, outlines the educational attainment of youth in care, the effect of education on transitioning to adulthood, and youth comments about these issues.

Judge Nolan Dawkins of the Alexandria, Virginia, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court spoke about NCJFCJ's Model Court Project and its focus on building collaborations to develop necessary community resources, including education assistance, to enhance permanency.

The youth and other speakers urged Congress to provide \$60 million for the educational and training tuition voucher program for youth aging out of foster care and youth adopted after age 16. Currently, there is no federal funding for this program.

Carmona Confirmed as Surgeon General

ON JULY 23, THE SENATE UNANIMOUSLY confirmed Dr. Richard Carmona as U.S. Surgeon General. Carmona has received wide praise for his military service as a Green Beret in Vietnam, his expertise in bioterrorism, and his record of public service as a trauma surgeon, nurse, and deputy sheriff in Arizona.

Carmona has emphasized the need for significant prevention efforts,

particularly in regard to childhood obesity, tobacco use, and HIV/AIDS. Carmona says these efforts must be geographically and culturally sensitive to be effective.

IDEA Takes Center Stage

ON JULY 1, THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION on Excellence in Special Education issued its first report, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and their Families*. With its findings and recommendations for improving educational performance of students with disabilities, the report was presented to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee at hearings July 9–10.

The report comes eight months after President Bush established the commission. The commission's objectives include collecting information and studying issues related to federal, state, and local special education programs, with the goal of recommending policies for improving the education performance of the more than six million students with disabilities.

Three broad recommendations form the foundation of the July report:

- Focus on results, not process.
- Embrace a model of prevention, not a model of failure.
- Consider children with disabilities as general education children first.

The report classifies the disabilities covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) into three major categories: sensory, physical

and neurological, and developmental. According to the report, 90% of all students served under IDEA have developmental disabilities. These “high-incidence” disabilities are closely linked with teacher referral, but make heavy use of psychometric tests for identification, often in ways that are not linked with instruction.”


Acknowledging that IDEA has been responsible for student successes, the commission shares the President’s support for the principles embodied in IDEA and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In its letter to President Bush, however, the commission says, “Much more remains to be done to meet the goal of ensuring that all children with disabilities achieve their full potential.”

The commission gathered input from more than 100 experts in special education, people with disabilities, and parents of children with disabilities, and conducted nationwide public meetings to compile the findings and recommendations for its 89-page report. Common themes among those whose needs were not being met were summarized in the commission’s findings:

- Although IDEA provides basic legal safeguards and access, “the current system often places process above results, and bureaucratic compliance above student achievement, excellence, and outcomes.”
- “The current system uses an antiquated model that waits for a child to fail, instead of a model based on prevention and intervention.”

- All special education students are general education students first, and, as such, costs should be viewed as an additional costs and not that of a separate program. “General and Special Education share responsibilities for children with disabilities.”
- “When a child fails to make progress in special education, parents don’t have adequate options and little recourse.”
- “The culture of compliance has often developed from pressures of litigation, diverting much energy from the public schools’ first mission: educating every child.”
- Thousands of children are misidentified or not identified each year because “many of the current methods of identifying children with disabilities lack validity.”
- Children with disabilities require teachers who are highly qualified and better-prepared.
- “Research on special education needs enhanced rigor and long-term coordination necessary to support the needs of children, educators, and parents.”
- “The focus on compliance and bureaucratic imperatives in the current system, instead of academic achievement and social outcomes, fails too many children with disabilities...Parents want an educational system that is results oriented and focused on the child’s needs—in school and beyond.”

Testifying before Congress, the commissioners would not support mandatory funding for IDEA, but encouraged more discretionary funding. This was a disappointment to many supporters of IDEA, which has been grossly underfunded since its passage.

A two-part series on serving children with disabilities appears in the July/August and September/October issues of CWLA’s magazine, *Children’s Voice*. The articles are available online at www.cwla.org. 

Take Action!

Contact the President and your U.S. Senators and Representative about key children’s issues. Tell them how their actions impact the vulnerable children and families in your state and local community. Your voice does make a difference!

President George W. Bush

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500
Comment Line 202/456-1111
Fax 202/456-2461

Your U.S. Senators

The Honorable (insert name)
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

Your U.S. Representative

The Honorable (insert name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Call Your Member of Congress

Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202/244-3121 and ask for your senator’s or representative’s office.

Contact by E-mail

Use CWLA Kids’ Advocate Online to e-mail your senators and representative about key children’s issues with a CWLA issue-specific letter, or write your own letter. Access Kids’ Advocate Online via the advocacy page of CWLA’s website at www.cwla.org/advocacy.

demonstration projects, for a total of \$26.351 million. The CAPTA basic state grant program and the community-based family resource and support grant program continue at last year's funding levels of \$22.013 million and \$22.417 million, respectively.

- **Child care** remains level-funded at \$2.1 billion.
- **The Social Services Block Grant** remains level-funded at \$1.7 billion. The 10% transfer from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families was restored.
- **The Mentoring for Children of Incarcerated Parents Program** received first-time funding of \$12 million.

The full Senate must now approve the bill. The House of Representatives has yet to act on its version of the appropriations bill. Action is expected in September. CM

The Opportunity Passport Act, S. 2657, amends the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to assist youth in foster care and youth aging out of foster care by creating electronic passports containing vital information, such as educational information and health records.

The bill would also create Individual Development Accounts that could be used for advancing education, running a business, buying a car, or other means to assist youth in their transition to independence.

The Fostering Service Act, S. 2658, amends the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to give more youth aging out of foster care opportunities to participate in national service programs. It provides new grant money for public service organizations, such as AmeriCorps, for programs to help former foster youth living independently by engaging them as mentors or service providers.

CWLA representatives appeared at a press conference with Clinton and Landrieu to announce the bills. Both bills have been referred to the Senate HELP Committee.

CWLA Endorses Mental Health Efforts

CWLA HAS ENDORSED LEGISLATION THAT would enable states to enhance the capacity of their Medicaid programs to address the complex needs of adults with severe and persistent mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. Introduced by Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) and Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ), the Medicaid Intensive Community Mental Health Treatment Act (H.R. 2365/S. 2072) would improve much-needed community mental health services, including case management and integrated treatment services for those with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

In a letter to House Appropriations Chair Bill Young (R-FL), CWLA joined others members of the Mental Health Liaison Group in supporting increased funding for mental health services as contained in the Senate Health and Human Services appropriations bill. The letter also calls for substantially increasing federal support for community-based mental health early intervention, prevention, and treatment services for FY 2003. CM

Children's Monitor

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