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EXECUTIVE OFFICER

June 28, 2016

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
SH-112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

We are writing to respectfully request your assistance that the Senate allow time to work with Los Angeles County and stakeholders to help address major concerns with H.R. 5456, The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016, including the need for flexibility, before the Senate considers such significant legislation impacting the nation's most vulnerable children and youth.

On June 21, 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 5456 which seeks to avoid unnecessary placement of foster care children and youth in group homes, and enable more children and youth to live safely with their families through the provision of prevention and in-home family services.

Los Angeles County agrees with the intent and the goals of this legislation; however, there are a number of provisions that will significantly restrict the County's ability to effectively serve abused and neglected children, and foster youth. Specifically, H.R. 5456 includes onerous out-of-home placement requirements that would hinder the County's efforts to implement California's Continuum of Care reforms under AB 403 (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015), which seek to reduce congregate care usage. In addition, H.R. 5456 proposes to eliminate federal reimbursement for several successful programs, such as California's Transitional Housing Plus Program, which provides housing and services for foster children ages 16 and older. As drafted, the legislation renders many children ineligible for federal foster care benefits and imposes costly requirements that divert funding from prevention and supportive services to families, among other concerns.

Since the draft bill language for H.R. 5456 was not released until June 10, 2016, state and local governments were not allowed adequate time to provide meaningful input on the legislation before it was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee

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and the House of Representatives. We understand that the measure is currently pending before the Senate and respectfully request your help with these major concerns with H.R. 5456, which will have a critical impact on the thousands of children and youth served in Los Angeles County and throughout the State.

Your assistance on this important matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


HILDA L. SOLIS
Chair of the Board
Supervisor, First District


MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Supervisor, Second District


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Supervisor, Fourth District


SHEILA KUEHL
Supervisor, Third District


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c: U.S. Senate Finance Committee