



CWDA

County Welfare Directors Association of California

925 L Street, Suite 350, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 443-1749

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

Washington, DC Office
Tom Joseph
Waterman & Associates
900 Second Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 898-1444
tj@wafed.com

To: County Welfare Directors Association of California

From: Tom Joseph, Director, CWDA Washington, D.C. Office

Date: June 9, 2015

Re: Federal Update

Since the May update, CWDA has been preparing and is nearing completion, comments on a draft child welfare financing proposal released by Senate Finance Committee Ranking Minority Member Ron Wyden (D-OR). Also on the policy front, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* was signed into law. And, the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 appropriations process is likely to again hit major legislative barriers due to Senate Democrat demands that Republicans increase spending for domestic programs.

Child Welfare Reform Concept Paper: Comments on the draft legislation are due to the Senate Finance Committee minority staff this Friday, June 12. CWDA has been participating and providing comments and questions at a series of child welfare coalition meetings held at the Children's Defense Fund's offices in Washington, DC. The focus of the draft bill is to provide new prevention funding through Title IV-E federal foster care. In general, CWDA's comments support the direction of the legislation and provide a number of recommendations to further refine the duration and scope of services to be provided under the bill.

The draft measure includes IV-E reimbursement for up to 12 months of services to keep children out of foster care who have been identified as 'candidates for foster care' (as well as their family members) or to help a child exit care. Eligible services would include, but not be limited to: parenting skills; counseling; substance use; housing barriers; and domestic violence services.

It also would more than double the total funding, to \$1 billion, for IV-B Promoting Safe and Stable Families prevention initiatives.

Senator Wyden's draft bill marks the first legislative initiative this congressional session which would take important steps in reforming child welfare financing. CWDA will continue to work with the committee and the child welfare coalition as the process unfolds.

CSEC: On May 29, President Obama signed into law the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* (P.L. 114-22). The final measure contained the Senate version of the legislation (S. 178), which avoided any further potential delaying tactics but also meant that there was not any discussion between the two houses on making any possible changes to the Senate measure.

The new law establishes a Domestic Trafficking Victims Fund through the Department of Justice (DOJ) paid with federal fines from persons convicted of trafficking and other sex crimes. Pending guidance from DOJ, three-year competitive block grants would be available to states and counties addressing the issue, with grants focused on collaboration, training and funding for services provided by entities involved with sexually exploited youth. It also would require state plans under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to include protocols identifying, assessing and providing comprehensive services to sex trafficking victims. The CAPTA provision is effective two years after enactment.

A summary of the new law's provisions may be found at the following link:
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/178>

FFY 2016 Labor-HHS Appropriations: Despite the GOP leadership pledging to move the FFY 2016 spending bills in a timely manner, Senate Democrats have all but stopped movement on most appropriations measures, including Labor-HHS. Senate Minority Leader Reid (D-NV) and Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Mikulski (D-MD) have signaled that they will not allow bills to move forward on the Senate floor without a new overall spending agreement which currently allows for some increases in defense spending but caps funding for domestic programs.