



Date: April 3, 2018

To: Members of the Coalition of Residential Excellence

From: Don Forrester, Executive Director

Subject: March 2018 Monthly Report

Legislative Update

- **Passage of 2018 Consolidated Appropriation Budget**

The legislative process continues to amaze me. I'll say upfront with all due respect for those in places of Congressional leadership that the hours spent in the process are often grueling and unrelenting. I watched with interest the House of Representatives Committee on Rules Hearing regarding the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1625 (*Senate amendment to H.R. 1625—TARGET Act [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018]*).

The Committee on Rules Hearing began at 10:00 p.m. on March 21 and concluded at in the early morning hours of March 22, with a vote scheduled-to-be-taken by the House later that morning.

Passage of the \$1.3 trillion dollar budget was in access of what previously had been asked by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on

Appropriations. The bill was provided to Congressional members hours before they were to vote. The bill was 2,132 pages in length. I am attaching a link to the House Rules Committee Hearing. I invite you to watch the process: <https://rules.house.gov/video/rules-committee-hearing-senate-amendment-hr-1625>

I am also attaching a link to a *Chronicle for Social Change* article that highlights some of the very significant budget increases. The article written by John Kelly is entitled: "Child Care, Child Protection Get Big Boosts in Omnibus Spending Deal". <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/child-welfare-2/child-care-child-protection-get-big-boosts-omnibus-spending-deal/30304>

- **Status of H.R. 4983 – Meadows [The Caring Homes and Improved Lives for Dependents (CHILD) Act**

This legislation continues to be held in the House Ways and Means Committee pending additional co-sponsors signing on in support of the legislation. Currently only one other Congressman has signed on as a co-sponsor: Mark Walker [R-N.C].

I have received a report that a Congressman from Texas also has plans to sign on as a co-sponsor. I suspect that the bill will need to garner a lot more support before it gets out of committee. Please continue to encourage your respective legislators to sign-on to this legislation.

- **Modernization of House Parent Exemption Bill**

This bill filed by Congressman Fleischmann of Tennessee continues to be held in the Education and Workforce Committee. Reportedly, several weeks ago the Committee requested that Congressman Fleischmann's office send a copy of the proposed legislation to the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour

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Division for review. Reportedly, the bill has been sent and no response has been made.

- **S.1091: The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act**

Representative Susan M. Collins [R-ME] introduced "The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act" on May 10, 2017. Subsequently 15 other Senators signed on as co-sponsors for the legislation. The bill was approved by the Senate on March 22, 2018 and has been sent to the House.

The bill establishes a federal task force charged with supporting grandparents raising grandchildren. A copy of the text of the bill was sent to both the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The text can be found at:

https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1091/text?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email

- **S1357/HR2290: The Family-Based Care Services Act**

The bipartisan *Family-Based Care Services Act of 2017* introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D- WI) and Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) on June 14, 2017 is intended to improve home-based health and mental health services for thousands of America's most vulnerable youth. This bill clarifies Medicaid policy that affects children, including foster children, with special behavioral health needs and/or medical disabilities as well as children living with kinship and biological caregivers. The legislation establishes a federal Medicaid definition for TFC. This commonsense clarification will promote accountability for states offering TFC, delineate CMS services approved for reimbursement, and drive personnel training and standards.

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Reportedly, the legislation is endorsed by a significant number of national children's and mental health organizations, including: The Foster Family-based Treatment Association, the Children's Defense Fund, Generations United, Child Welfare League of America, National Foster Care Coalition, First Focus Campaign for Children, Kids Peace, the Bair Foundation, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, the Children's Leadership Council, National Council for Behavioral Health, and Voice for Adoption.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), Rep. Mark Wayne Mullin (R-OK) and Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) have introduced bipartisan companion legislation in the House of Representatives (H.R. 2290).

Reportedly, the need for action on the aforementioned legislation is seen as important in conjunction with passage of the Families First Prevention Services Act.

- **Next Steps**

I have reached out to Jerry Milner, DSW, Associate Commissioner at the Children's Bureau and Acting Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families requesting a meeting. He could not have been more amenable to visit. Currently his secretary is attempting to coordinate schedules between him, David Kelly, his special assistant and myself.

I shared with Dr. Milner that when I visited with Mr. Ryan T.F. Martin, Senior Human Services Advisor, Senate Finance Committee, he mentioned that the Administration on Children, Youth and Families under his leadership would be sorting out the logistics for implementation of the Family First Act. While our organization was not an advocate for passage of the Legislation, I assured him that he could anticipate and trust that we will rise to the highest level of professionalism in adhering to the law as we continue to be resourceful for children and families from hard places.

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I think it is important for CORE members within our organization to know Dr. Milner's vision and his plans for strengthening the child welfare system. Obviously, as member agencies we are facing a lot of obstacles and challenges as we move forward due to recent legislation, but I'm confident we'll be able to create the kind of relationship with the Administration on Children, Youth and Families that we'll continue to carve out a place in the continuum of care.

- **2018 CORE National Conference**

Don't forget that the 2018 CORE National Conference is scheduled for October 9-11, 2018. Methodist Home in Waco is hosting the conference. Later this week, I hope to send you information concerning the conference theme.

It is too early to register for the 2018 CORE National Conference, but it is not too early to reserve your hotel room. As most are aware, The Fixer Upper has elevated Waco's tourist draw and October is a big month for activities related to the Silos and Magnolia Farms. Please don't delay in making your hotel reservations now.

Once Magnolia Farms announces their schedule for October 2018, it is anticipated that hotel rooms in Waco will be in short supply.

The Hotel Indigo, located in downtown Waco, has reserved a block of rooms for CORE. It is within walking distance of the Silos and conveniently located to our conference site.

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It is anticipated that folks will need to arrive on the evening of Monday, October 8th since the conference is set to begin the following morning. A link to make reservations at the Hotel Indigo for the nights of October 8, 9, 10 and 11 can be accessed through the following link. For folks desiring to stay the weekend for more Silo and Magnolia Farm's excitement, reservations for the weekend can be made by calling 1-800-439-4745 or go online to make separate reservations.

The conference rate for the hotel for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights is \$139.00. The rate for Thursday night is \$159.00.

- **Networking**

I was provided the opportunity to meet with the board of directors of the Association of Christian Childcare Administrators at their annual in Oklahoma City a couple of weeks ago. I shared information about CORE as well as providing a legislative update and variables that weigh heavily on the future. A number of ACCA members are also CORE members. I stressed the importance of us working together. I think there is a favorable likelihood that other ACCA members will join CORE.

- **CORE Membership Expansion**

I've been in conversation with a number of agencies concerning the merits associated to CORE membership. I've got one new application pending and two more promised in the immediate future. Your advocacy in inviting your colleagues at other agencies to join with us would be greatly appreciated.