

February 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

Prevent Child Abuse America and our national network of 47 state chapters and over 400 Healthy Families America home visitation sites applaud your efforts to move quickly on a much needed economic stimulus package. We are pleased that both the House and Senate bills contain investments in services that foster the best possible environments for a developing child, such as early education and child abuse prevention.

As you work to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate bills, we urge you to ensure that the final package includes **\$400 million for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)**, as provided in the Senate bill. SSBG's built-in flexibility enables states to address a range of needs that families experience during periods of economic instability and upheaval. In 2006, states used SSBG to fund child abuse prevention services for 20% of the children using those services that year, making it one of the largest funding sources for prevention.

When we invest in children, we realize subsequent returns in stronger communities and positive workforce development that logically leads to robust economic development. When we don't prevent intensive stress on children, like child abuse and neglect, we undermine their healthy development. The *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study* and related studies show a strong correlation between child abuse and neglect and: debilitating and chronic health consequences; drug dependency; mental health illness; and impaired worker performance, including absenteeism. **Addressing the effects of abuse and neglect costs our nation an estimated \$104 billion a year.** Including SSBG funding in the economic recovery package will have immediate and long-term effects on our nation's economy by enabling states to fund a range of services that struggling families need right now, including child abuse prevention services, thereby diminishing the need for more costly care in the future.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please contact Bridget Gavaghan, Senior Director of Public Policy, at 312-334-6819, bgavaghan@preventchildabuse.org.

Sincerely,



James M. Hmurovich
President & CEO

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Mission Statement

To prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children.

