

Inside this Issue:

- ❑ FY 2005 Spending Bills Unresolved as Congress Heads Home
- ❑ Unfinished Business – Including TANF Reauthorization – Likely to Carry Over to the 109th Congress
- ❑ House Passes Interstate Placement Legislation
- ❑ Make Your Voice Heard on Election Day!
- ❑ Useful Resources for Advocates

FY 2005 Spending Bills Unresolved as Congress Heads Home

Despite work remaining on lengthy to-do lists that include several FY 2005 appropriations measures, members of both the U.S. House and Senate left town Columbus Day weekend; the goal is to finish spending bills – including the Labor-HHS-Education measure that funds programs under the Child Abuse and Neglect Treatment Act (CAPTA) -- upon reconvening November 16th for a post-election, lame duck session. Since Congress was unable to complete FY 2005 appropriations prior to the start of the fiscal year on October 1st, lawmakers passed a continuing resolution (PL 108-309) to keep the government operating at 2004 levels through November 20th. Of the 13 appropriations bills considered by Congress, only Department of Defense, Military Construction, Homeland Security, and District of Columbia bills have passed both chambers and been signed into law.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill, which includes funding for CAPTA and other children's programs, is one of nine outstanding spending measures still awaiting final action. It is likely that CAPTA funding increases will be included in the package ultimately approved by Congress because similar dollar amounts were included in Labor-HHS bills passed by the full House and the Senate Appropriations Committee. The following table outlines FY 2005 recommendations by both the House and Senate for CAPTA state, community-based, and discretionary grants:

**FUNDING AMOUNTS (IN MILLIONS) FOR SELECTED PROGRAMS
HOUSE LABOR-HHS-ED APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE BILL**

FY2005 President's Budget Request	FY2004 Actual	FY05 President's Request	FY05 House (+/- FY04)	FY05 Senate Approps Cmtee
CAPTA State Grants	\$21.9	\$42	\$28.5 (+6.6)	\$27.5 (+5.6)
CAPTA Community-Based Grants	\$33.2	\$65	\$43.2 (+10.0)	\$43.2 (+10.0)
CAPTA Discretionary R & D	\$34.4	\$26	\$26.3 (-8.1)	\$34.4 (+/- 0)
TOTAL	\$89.5	\$133	\$98 (+8.5)	\$105.1 (+15.6)

The House passed its Labor-HHS measure September 9th. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version September 15th; the full Senate did not vote on the bill prior to adjourning October 11th.



Senate and House recommendations are similar for many child and family programs, including those under CAPTA. Differences between the House and Senate bills – the House provided \$1 million more than the Senate bill for CAPTA state grants, and the Senate provided \$8 million more in discretionary funding than the House – will need to be resolved by a conference committee when Congress resumes work on appropriations.

It is likely that unfinished spending bills – including Labor-HHS -- will be combined into an omnibus package once the November elections have determined who will control the White House and Senate. Congressional staff have reportedly begun putting an appropriations package together in preparation for the lame duck session. Stay tuned to *Prevention Advocate* for future updates as the appropriations cycle nears completion, either by the end of the year or perhaps when the new Congress convenes in January 2005.

Unfinished Business – Including TANF Reauthorization -- Likely to Carry Over to the 109th Congress

As explained above, Congress was unable to complete the FY2005 appropriations cycle before adjourning for a 5-week election break. Classic partisan squabbling, coupled with the most heated Presidential race in recent memory, also prevented Congress from coming to consensus on a host of other legislative priorities. Child welfare financing, a topic of numerous Congressional hearings and the focus of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, will therefore need to be addressed by the next Congress. Reauthorization measures for TANF/Child Care (H.R. 4) and Head Start (S. 1940; H.R. 2210) are also likely dead for the year, meaning that these bills will be re-drafted next year.

Having failed to complete TANF reauthorization before it was set to expire September 30th, Congress passed its 9th short-term stopgap to extend existing law through March 2005 (PL 108-308). Once again there were attempts on Capitol Hill to use the TANF extension as a means to bring about substantive policy changes to the program. In the end, each chamber passed what is known as a “clean extension”.

The 1996 welfare reform law, authorized for five years, was originally set to expire September 30, 2002. The House passed its current reauthorization bill in February 2003. A companion bill in the Senate stalemated this past spring over procedural and partisan issues. Before shelving the measure, Senators approved \$6 billion in child care increases. The House bill included a \$1 billion increase.

House Passes Interstate Placement Legislation

One bill that actually saw action this fall was H.R. 4504, the *Orderly and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act*, sponsored by Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-TX) and reported on in the previous edition of *Prevention Advocate*. The bill, passed by the House on October 5th, is intended to shorten the length of time it takes state child welfare agencies to complete out-of-state placements. Among other provisions, the bill sets timelines for the completion of home studies for children placed across state lines.

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate on September 8th. It is unclear at this time if the Senate intends to move this bill during the lame duck session in November.



Make Your Voice Heard on Election Day!

As November 2nd nears, please be mindful that our elected officials make important decisions affecting our children, families, and program clients. Elections present important opportunities to learn about candidates running for office, including where they stand on issues affecting children and families. Be an effective advocate by adequately educating yourself, and by ensuring that your voice is heard on election day. Here are some resources to assist you:

- ❑ PCA America has developed an elections advocacy guide that can be accessed through our website (<http://www.preventchildabuse.org>) or directly through the following link: http://www.preventchildabuse.org/get_active/election_year_guide/AdvocacyElectionYear.htm. At this site, you will also find links to our 2004 Candidate Questionnaire and Letter and the complete *PCA America Advocacy Guide*.
- ❑ The mission of Every Child Matters is to promote the adoption of smart policies for children and families by making children's needs a national political priority. Go to <http://everychildmatters.org> for candidate information specific to children's issues, and for printable get-out-the-vote materials.
- ❑ The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that is very active around election time. The League has developed a wealth of information on candidates and their positions as well as important information on protecting your vote. Check out their website at <http://www.lwv.org>.
- ❑ Nonpartisan information on voting developed for parents by parents can be found at http://www.circleofparents.org/downloads/parents_voting.pdf. This document was developed by Parent Leaders associated with the Circle of Parents program.

Useful Resources for Advocates

- ❑ The Blue Ribbon Ball will be held on November 20, 2004 at the Field Museum in Chicago, one week after the opening of the exhibit featuring the clothes and accessories worn by Jackie Kennedy during the presidency of her husband, John F. Kennedy. Guests at the Ball are invited to tour the exhibit during the event. The evening also includes a silent and live auction, dinner and dancing. Tickets start at \$150. For more information, please contact Babette Nyka at (312) 663-3520 ext. 864 or email at bnyka@preventchildabuse.org.
- ❑ The Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has posted an assortment of information on its website about Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs), which assess states' progress in improving outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system. General information can be found at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwrp/index.htm>. A report and power point presentation on findings from the latest round of reviews can be accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwrp/results.htm>. State-specific information is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwrp/index.htm>.



- ❑ The Children's Bureau at HHS recently announced FY 2004 competitive cooperative agreements and discretionary grant awards, including organizations selected to operate seven national child welfare resource centers. The Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project, Inc. is the new grantee for the National Resource Center for Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. PCA America and Circle of Parents are two of several organizations partnering with Chapel Hill on the project. A complete list of awards distributed by the Children's Bureau can be accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/funding/fy2004ga.htm>.
- ❑ Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the nation's official poverty rate rose to 12.5% in 2003 from 12.1% in 2002, with an even larger rate of increase among children living in poverty. The poverty rate among children grew from 16.7% (12.1 million children) in 2002 to 17.6% (12.9 million children) in 2003, an increase of 733,000 children. The number of uninsured also increased by 1.4 million to a total of 45 million people in 2003. The full Census Bureau report can be found at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income.html>.
- ❑ A side-by-side comparison of marriage and fatherhood provisions in House and Senate TANF reauthorization bills, put together by the Center for Law and Social Policy, can be found at http://www.clasp.org/DMS/Documents/1097166935.31/Marriage_SBS_100604.pdf.
- ❑ A report from the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) documents new state child welfare laws that may be of interest to prevention advocates. The report can be downloaded at <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/childlegislation.pdf>.

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