
Inside this Issue:

- ❑ Senate Appropriators Cut Child Abuse Prevention Funding
- ❑ Senate and House Pass PSSF Reauthorization Bills
- ❑ Advocates Gear up for Possible EBAH Hearing
- ❑ Congress Establishes National Registries for Child Abuse/Neglect and Sex Offenders
- ❑ House Unable to Pass Sunset Commission Bills Prior to Recess
- ❑ CWLA Issues Report on Eroding Foster Care Eligibility
- ❑ Potential August Recess Activities

Senate Appropriators Cut Child Abuse Prevention Funding

On July 20th, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed their FY 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. Like the House appropriators' version of the bill, the Senate committee cut or level-funded most human services programs. Of particular concern to Prevention Advocate readers, the Senate committee funds the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) discretionary program at just \$75 million, \$14 million less than Congress provided in FY 2006, and \$24 million less than allocated in FY 2005. PSSF provides the largest federal funding stream dedicated to preventing child maltreatment. Prevent Child Abuse America has posted an alert to our [Legislative Action Center](#) urging people to contact their members of Congress in support of PSSF funding.

Some are claiming that PSSF is receiving an overall increase by pointing to the additional \$40 million provided in the mandatory funding stream. This misperception ignores the fact that the \$40 million is already earmarked for specific purposes that fall outside of the four PSSF categories in both the House and Senate versions of reauthorization. This will result in a net loss in funding to the prevention programs that PSSF supports. More details are provided in the article below.

On a more positive note, Senate appropriators joined House appropriators in rejecting the President's \$500 million proposed cut to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). SSBG is a capped entitlement that funds a range of social services for children, families, the elderly, and the disabled, and makes up 12% of all federal child welfare spending. Services funded include child abuse prevention, foster care, in-home services, and adoption services.

The new fiscal year officially begins on October 1st, but it is highly unlikely that Congress will wrap up FY 2007 appropriations by then. Congress will be on recess for the entire month of August. Meanwhile, the House and Senate are expected to break at the end of September to allow members of Congress to campaign leading up to the November elections. House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH-8) has already indicated that the House will likely be in session into December. Folks inside the beltway are talking "omnibus," meaning Congress could look to bundle all or many of the spending bills together into one large package. To date, the House has passed 10 of their 11 spending bills, while the Senate has passed just 1 of their 12. As per usual, Labor-HHS figures to be one of the most problematic spending bills for Congress to agree on. Some of the major sticking points include an increase to the minimum wage included in the House committee mark and the additional \$1 billion in spending included in the Senate mark. The table below provides a breakdown of how key prevention priorities have fared so far in this year's appropriations battle.

Next Steps: Prevent Child Abuse America has alerts and sample messages to Congress on CAPTA, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, and the Social Services Block Grant posted on our [Legislative Action Center](#). Be sure to visit our website for talking points on appropriations, or to e-mail your members of Congress about programs prevention advocates care about.

FY 2007 Labor-HHS Key Program Appropriations

| Program | FY 2006 | FY 2007 President's Request | FY 2007 House Approps. | FY 2007 Senate Approps. |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State | \$27 m | \$27 m | \$27 m | \$27 m |
| CAPTA Discretionary | \$25.7 m | \$25.7 | \$26.1 m | \$27.5 m |
| CAPTA Community-Based | \$42.4 m | \$42.4 | \$42.4 m | \$42.4 m |
| PSSF Mandatory | \$305 m ¹ | \$345 m | \$345 m | \$345 m |
| PSSF Discretionary | \$89 m | \$89 m | \$89 m | \$75 m |
| Social Services Block Grant | \$1.7 b | \$1.2 b | \$1.7 b | \$1.7 b |
| Child Care and Development Block Grant | \$2.06 b | \$2.06 b | \$2.06 b | \$2.06 b |
| Head Start | \$6.87 b | \$6.78 b | \$6.78 b | \$6.78 b |
| Community Services Block Grant | \$630 m | Zero | \$450 m | \$630 m |
| Compassion Capital Fund | \$64.3 m | \$100 m | \$54.5 m | \$54.4 m |
| Even Start | \$99 m | Zero | \$70 m | Zero |

Senate and House Pass PSSF Reauthorization Bills

Negotiations Expected in August

The House and Senate are making progress on reauthorizing the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program (PSSF). On July 13th, the Senate passed their PSSF reauthorization bill, *Improving Outcomes for Children Affected by Meth Act of 2006* (S 3525), by unanimous consent. The House approved their version, *Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006* (HR 5640), by voice vote on July 25th. A conference will be needed to reconcile the differences between the House and the Senate bills. Staff-level negotiations are expected to take place during the August recess.

The biggest point of contention between the two bills is how to direct an additional \$40 million in mandatory funding. The Senate-passed bill mandates that the \$40 million increase be set aside for competitive grants to improve outcomes for children affected by meth abuse and addiction. The House-passed bill directs the \$40 million towards state grants for workforce development for child welfare workers with an emphasis on increasing the number of children in foster care receiving monthly caseworker visits. The \$40 million increase was first authorized for FY 2006 as part of the *Deficit Reduction Act* enacted earlier this year, though funding for FY 2006 has yet to be allocated. The House and Senate both support extending the \$40 increase through FY 2011. In written testimony submitted to the Senate Finance and House Ways & Means committees, Prevent Child Abuse America urged Congress to extend the \$40 million increase and to allow states to use the

¹ Congress authorized \$345 million in PSSF mandatory funding for FY 2006 as part of the Deficit Reduction Act, but that funding has not been allocated.

additional funding for the four designated purposes of PSSF. With neither chamber endorsing that option, chances for our initial position prevailing appear slim. After surveying our networks, Prevent Child Abuse America has determined that the organization will remain neutral on the House and Senate proposals for the \$40 million.

PSSF Background

PSSF provides the largest federal funding source dedicated to prevention and family support services in child welfare. In 2001, Congress set the capped entitlement funding level at \$305 million through FY 2006 and added a \$200 million discretionary grant subject to annual appropriations, placing the total authorized funding for PSSF at \$505 million. States must spend 20 percent of their PSSF allotments on each of four categories: family support services; family preservation; time-limited family reunification; and adoption promotion and support. Unfortunately, PSSF has not been fully funded since the discretionary grant was authorized. The combined mandatory and discretionary funding level for FY 2005 totaled just \$403 million. In FY 2006, Congress appropriated \$89 million in discretionary funding, a \$9 million decrease from the previous year, for a total allocation in FY 2006 of \$394 million.

Advocates Gear up for Possible EBAH Hearing

As reported in the [June Prevention Advocate](#), the Education Reform subcommittee of the House Education & Workforce committee has agreed to schedule a hearing this fall on the *Education Begins at Home Act* (EBAH, HR 3628) and the home visiting service delivery model. While nothing is guaranteed, a hearing will likely be scheduled after Congress returns from August break. Prevent Child Abuse America and our national partners on the Home Visit Coalition are working committee staff to identify potential witnesses for the hearing – though committee members will have the final say. EBAH is not expected to move forward this year, but the hearing would provide a significant boost leading up to reintroduction next year.

The Education Begins at Home Act (S 503 and HR 3628)

As reported in previous issues of the *Prevention Advocate*, EBAH would extend to a broad range of families the opportunity to benefit from Healthy Families America and other quality home visitation programs. The legislation would provide \$500 million over three years to help states establish or expand quality home visitation programs. Of the \$500 million authorized, \$400 million would be provided to states on a formula basis to expand and enhance home visiting programs, while the remaining \$100 million would be divided between two competitive grants to reach military families and families with English Language Learners.

Congress Establishes National Registries for Child Abuse/Neglect and for Sex Offenders

Before adjourning for the August recess, Congress passed the *Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006* (HR 4472), an anti-crime bill that would establish a national child abuse and neglect registry, as well as a national sex offender registry, among other provisions. The President signed the bill into law on July 27th, marking the 25th anniversary of the abduction of Adam Walsh, the son of *America's Most Wanted* host John Walsh.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Provisions

The new law requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Attorney General, to create a national registry of substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect. Registry information is to be limited to the name of the perpetrator and the nature of the substantiated case. Information on the national registry will be available to federal, state, tribe, and local government entities that require the information to carry out their responsibilities to protect children from child abuse and neglect. The Act mandates that that HHS conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing data collection standards for a national child abuse and neglect registry. Many children's advocates are concerned with how the registry will be implemented and managed given the current lack of uniformity among state registries. We will keep you posted as this provision is implemented.

Summary of Key Sex Offender Provisions

Among other provisions, the new law:

- Requires each state to maintain a sex offender registry, and for the Attorney General to maintain a national registry. Sex offenders would register in jurisdictions where the offender was convicted, resides, is an employee, and is a student. Registration must include the offender's name, address, Social Security number, name and address of employer and/or school, photograph, a photocopy of a valid driver's license or ID card, license plate number, a DNA sample, fingerprints, a physical description of the sex offender, and criminal history.
- Establishes three tiers of sex offenders based on the seriousness of the crime, whether the victim is a child, and the offender's criminal history.
- The registry would include juvenile offenders 14 years of age and older at the time of the offense who are adjudicated for an offense comparable to or more severe than aggravated sexual abuse.
- Requires states to make registered information, except for the offender's Social Security number, available to the public through a national website. It allows jurisdictions the option of exempting "tier 1" offenders from appearing on the website, unless the offense was against a minor.
- Establishes a program to provide notification of a sex offender registration to communities.
- Increases mandatory penalties for violent crimes and sexual offenses against children.

House Unable to Pass Sunset Commission Bills Prior to Recess Action Possible This Fall

In the week leading up to the start of their August recess, the House tried but failed to bring two bills to the floor that would make it easier to eliminate federal programs and cut discretionary and entitlement funding. *The Government Efficiency Act* (HR 5766), introduced by Representative Tiahrt (R-KS-4), would give Congress and the President the authority to set up "sunset commissions" to review and recommend changes to and elimination of federal discretionary and entitlement programs. The panels' recommendations would be sent to the House and Senate for up or down votes, with

limited review by congressional committees, no amendments, and in the Senate, no filibusters. *The Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act* (HR 3282), introduced by Rep. Brady (R-TX-8), would create a single permanent sunset commission to review all federal programs and agencies every 12 years. Programs would be eliminated automatically within one year of the review, regardless of the commission's recommendation, unless Congress acted to save the program.

The House Government Reform Committee approved both bills on July 20th. House leadership attempted to bring the bills to the floor for a vote prior to the August recess, but chose not to when it became clear they did not have the votes necessary to ensure passage. Leadership will likely attempt to bring some version of sunset commissions to the floor when Representatives return to the Capitol in September. As reported in the [June Prevention Advocate](#), the Senate Budget Committee included a sunset commission provision in the *Stop Over-Spending (SOS) Act of 2006* (S 3521), a broad federal budget process bill intended to reduce federal spending.

For more information, visit [OMB Watch's Sunset Commission Resource Center](#).

CWLA Issues Report on Eroding Foster Care Eligibility

Excerpted from Child Welfare League of America's Children's Monitor, Vol. 19, Issue 30: 7/24/2006

On July 17, CWLA held an event at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, to release a new report on the erosion of federal support for children in foster care. July 16, 2006, marked 10 years since eligibility for federal Foster Care and Adoption Assistance was frozen by the 1996 TANF legislation. For a child to be eligible for federal funding through Title IV-E for either foster care or adoption assistance, a state must determine whether that child came from a family that would have been eligible under the old AFDC program as it existed on July 16, 1996. [The report, "Ten Years of Leaving Foster Children Behind," is available on CWLA's website.](#)

The report reviews caseload data from 1998 through 2004 and compares the number of children in care who were eligible for Title IV-E foster care funding and those who were not supported by federal IV-E funding. Overall IV-E coverage has decreased from 55% of foster children in 1998 to 45% by 2004. The data indicate that more than 50,000 children per year in foster care are now ineligible for federal support due to the AFDC link.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the eligibility link to the 1996 AFDC eligibility standards means that eligibility for foster care in many states may be limited to those children residing in families at less than half the federal poverty level or less than \$8,000 a year. The AFDC link also limits support for adoption assistance since that program is also tied to the July 16, 1996, date. Since data on potentially eligible adoptions is not available, the report does not include an analysis of the financial impact on adoptive families.

CWLA is calling on Washington to replace the current link with options, such as making all children eligible, since all children who are victims of neglect and abuse must be a national priority. Another option would be to make all children eligible through a phased in coverage that may require a reduced federal match as coverage increases. This is similar to H.R. 3576 sponsored by Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA).

Potential August Recess Activities

Congress is in recess for month of August (the House recessed July 28th, the Senate is expected to recess on August 4th), providing an opportunity for advocates to get some face-to-face time with their members of Congress in their home state/district. Some examples of recess activities you may find helpful to your advocacy efforts include:

- **Program Site Visits:** Invite your Senators and Representative to spend time at one of your prevention programs so that they can see firsthand how your programs are helping to prevent child abuse and neglect. Tie the program to federal policies (ex. have your members of Congress shadow a home visitor and use that opportunity to educate them on the Education Begins at Home Act).
- **State/District Meetings:** Schedule a meeting with your members of Congress in their state/district offices. Consider coordinating with other prevention advocates in your area to both demonstrate the broad support for federal policies supporting child abuse prevention, and to increase your likelihood of securing a meeting. Even though they're on recess, members of Congress will likely have pretty packed schedules, especially considering this is an election year.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** Representatives and Senators often schedule a host of "town hall meetings" during August recess to provide constituents with an opportunity to hear about his/her priorities and to ask questions about the member's positions. Contact state and district offices for scheduling information and attend the meetings prepared to ask a question on a specific child abuse prevention issue (i.e. Promoting Safe and Stable Families funding or the Education Begins at Home Act).

Writer: Bridget Gavaghan

Contributing Writer: Jane Ascroft

Special Contributor: Tom Birch by way of the *Washington Memorandum* (If you would like to subscribe to the *Washington Memorandum*, contact Tom Birch at bircht@earthlink.net).

© 2003 by Prevent Child Abuse America