



... because every child needs a permanent, loving, and culturally sensitive family

June 20, 2008

The Honorable Jerry Weller
United States House of Representatives
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Weller:

On behalf of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), I would like to thank you for and offer our full support of **the bipartisan Fostering Connections to Success Act of 2008 (H.R. 6307)**. We are thankful for your leadership in introducing a bill that will truly help children, youth, and families across this country. NACAC is grateful that the bill includes:

- **Adoption Incentive Program Improvements** — We think that the re-authorization and expansion of the adoption incentive program will be very valuable. NACAC is particularly glad to see that states will have a longer period of time to use the incentive funds, which will allow them to support new adoptive families and otherwise help children who have been in foster care.
- **Title IV-E Guardianship Support for Relative Caregivers** — Adoption is a wonderful option for children who cannot return home, but it should not be the only choice. Federally supported guardianship is an important option that will enable thousands of foster children to leave care safely and permanently to live with caring relatives. These placements are safe, stable, and effective at keeping siblings from being separated, while also helping families meet children's special needs.
- **Extending Adoption Assistance and Foster Care Maintenance up to Age 21** — Many children in foster care are developmentally delayed and have special needs. Research has shown that providing continued support after age 18 enables them to achieve better outcomes in the areas of housing, employment, and more. NACAC is grateful that states that choose to continue support to youth beyond age 18 will have the support of the federal government as well.
- **Direct Title IV-E Funding to Tribes** — NACAC is strong supporter of direct funding to empower tribes to support families and children under their jurisdiction. Since passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act, tribes have had responsibility for children in their care without the corresponding means to achieve positive outcomes for Native children.
- **Other Provisions** — NACAC is also pleased to see the provision that requires notification of prospective adopters about the adoption tax credit for adoptions from foster care. This should help ensure that more families who adopt from care are able to get the support they need. Provisions in the bill that encourage sibling placements, and improve educational stability and health care for children in care are also welcome to us.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership in support of children and youth in this country. We look forward to passage of the bill this year.

Sincerely,

Joe Kröll
Executive Director