

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4119, the Gulf Islands National Seashore Land Exchange Act.

The Gulf Islands National Seashore is a national park that draws millions of visitors to the islands in the northern Gulf of Mexico. It includes the Mississippi barrier islands of Petit Bois Island, Horn Island, East and West Ship Island, and Cat Island, as well as the Davis Bayou Area.

I am proud to have this important park and its natural beaches, historic sites, and wildlife sanctuaries within my district.

The Gulf Islands National Seashore has been a part of the Mississippi Gulf Coast community since Congress established the park in 1971. Since that establishment, the Gulf Islands National Seashore has worked closely with the Mark Seymour Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW Post 5699. In fact, the post has shared a road with the seashore for the better part of the last 30 years.

The Gulf Islands National Seashore Land Exchange Act would make permanent a 30-year easement that has provided an access road and driveway for the VFW. In exchange, the VFW will give the Gulf Islands National Seashore some of its acreage, which includes wetlands.

The Gulf Islands National Seashore and the VFW both strongly support this land exchange, but the Department of the Interior needs congressional approval before it can make the land exchange official. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I encourage the House to pass this bill today.

I would also like to thank Chairman BISHOP, Ranking Member TSONGAS, as well as Subcommittee Chairman MCCLINTOCK, and the Committee on Natural Resources, for their support and help in bringing this bill to the floor and seeing it across the finish line.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, if only the budget were this easy. I would ask for the adoption of this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4119, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MODERNIZING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4472) to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt a centralized electronic

system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide grants to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4472

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) *when a child in foster care cannot return safely home, the child deserves to be placed in a setting that is best for that child, regardless of whether it is in the child's State or another State;*

(2) *the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was established in 1960 to provide a uniform legal framework for the placement of children across State lines in foster and adoptive homes;*

(3) *frequently, children waiting to be placed with an adoptive family, relative, or foster parent in another State spend more time waiting for this to occur than children who are placed with an adoptive, family, relative, or foster parent in the same State, because of the outdated, administratively burdensome ICPC process;*

(4) *no child should have to wait longer to be placed in a loving home simply because the child must cross a State line;*

(5) *the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) was launched in August 2014 in Indiana, Nevada, Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, and is expected to be expanded into additional States to improve the administrative process by which children are placed with families across State lines;*

(6) *States using this electronic interstate case-processing system have reduced administrative costs and the amount of staff time required to process these cases, and caseworkers can spend more time helping children instead of copying and mailing paperwork between States;*

(7) *since NEICE was launched, placement time has decreased by 30 percent for interstate foster care placements; and*

(8) *on average, States using this electronic interstate case-processing system have been able to reduce from 24 business days to 13 business days the time it takes to identify a family for a child and prepare the paperwork required to start the ICPC process.*

SEC. 3. STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.—Section 471(a)(25) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(25)) is amended—*

(1) *by striking "provide" and insert "provides"; and*

(2) *by inserting " , which, not later than October 1, 2026, shall include the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system" before the 1st semicolon.*

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.—*

(1) *IN GENERAL.—The amendments by subsection (a) shall take effect on the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply to payments under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act for calendar quarters beginning on or after such date.*

(2) *DELAY PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION REQUIRED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) is required in order for a State plan developed pursuant to part E of title IV of the So-*

cial Security Act to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by subsection (a), the plan shall not be regarded as failing to meet any of the additional requirements before the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter beginning after the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. For purposes of the preceding sentence, if the State has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session is deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

SEC. 4. GRANTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.

Section 437 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 637) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(g) GRANTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.—

"(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this subsection is to facilitate the development of an electronic interstate case-processing system for the exchange of data and documents to expedite the placements of children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes across State lines.

"(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—A State that desires a grant under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary an application containing the following:

"(A) A description of the goals and outcomes to be achieved during the period for which grant funds are sought, which goals and outcomes must result in—

"(i) reducing the time it takes for a child to be provided with a safe and appropriate permanent living arrangement across State lines;

"(ii) improving administrative processes and reducing costs in the foster care system; and

"(iii) the secure exchange of relevant case files and other necessary materials in real time, and timely communications and placement decisions regarding interstate placements of children.

"(B) A description of the activities to be funded in whole or in part with the grant funds, including the sequencing of the activities.

"(C) A description of the strategies for integrating programs and services for children who are placed across State lines.

"(D) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

"(3) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may make a grant to a State that complies with paragraph (2).

"(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A State to which a grant is made under this subsection shall use the grant to support the State in connecting with the electronic interstate case-processing system described in paragraph (1).

"(5) EVALUATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the final year in which grants are awarded under this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress, and make available to the general public by posting on a website, a report that contains the following information:

"(A) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) has changed the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

"(B) The number of cases subject to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children that were processed through the electronic interstate case-processing system, and the number of interstate child placement cases that were processed outside the electronic interstate case-processing system, by each State in each year.

"(C) The progress made by States in implementing the electronic interstate case-processing system.

"(D) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected various metrics

related to child safety and well-being, including the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

“(E) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected administrative costs and caseworker time spent on placing children across State lines.

“(6) DATA INTEGRATION.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretariat for the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and the States, shall assess how the electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) could be used to better serve and protect children that come to the attention of the child welfare system, by—

“(A) connecting the system with other data systems (such as systems operated by State law enforcement and judicial agencies, systems operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purposes of the Innocence Lost National Initiative, and other systems);

“(B) simplifying and improving reporting related to paragraphs (34) and (35) of section 471(a) regarding children or youth who have been identified as being a sex trafficking victim or children missing from foster care; and

“(C) improving the ability of States to quickly comply with background check requirements of section 471(a)(20), including checks of child abuse and neglect registries as required by section 471(a)(20)(B).”

SEC. 5. CONTINUATION OF DISCRETIONARY FUNDING TO PROMOTE SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES.

Section 437(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 637(a)) is amended by striking “2016” and inserting “2017”.

SEC. 6. RESERVATION OF FUNDS TO IMPROVE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.

Section 437(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 637(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) IMPROVING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.—The Secretary shall reserve \$5,000,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2017 for grants under subsection (g), and the amount so reserved shall remain available through fiscal year 2021.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4472, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of key points I would like to emphasize to explain how this legislation came to be and why I believe it is so important at this critical juncture.

First, my wife, Jenny, and I have four young children of our own. As a parent, I know I speak for millions when I say that every child deserves to grow up in a stable, loving home.

When the bond between parent and child is broken and children cannot

safely return home, they deserve to be placed in a setting that is best for them, regardless of whether that is a home within their State or across a State line. However, due to various factors, children are languishing in the child welfare system, waiting to be placed with an adoptive family, a relative, or foster parents in another State.

One contributor is the fact that today, in order to place a child with a grandparent across a State line, caseworkers must literally print out hundreds of pages of paperwork, package it up, and mail case files to another State. The receiving State responds in kind, completing their portion, and then mailing the case file back. It is an antiquated process that, on average, takes more than 5 months to complete. At a time when communities, courts, and caseworkers across the country are already overwhelmed, this inefficient, paper-based placement process is simply unacceptable.

For children, the sooner we get them placed into a forever home, the better. I say this as someone with experience. Before entering Congress, I provided pro bono legal services for adoptive couples. These situations I have seen can be extremely hard on all parties, but none more so than the child.

□ 1400

You don't have to take my word for it. Statistics show that the longer a child remains in the child welfare system, the less likely they are to have successful outcomes later in life.

When proven interventions that can help these children present themselves, I believe it is our moral imperative to act. It is this belief that led to the solution we are discussing here today.

The Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act would incentivize States to connect to an electronic interstate case processing system that has already been tested in a handful of States, including my home State of Indiana and the District of Columbia.

These pilot programs achieved substantial reductions in the time it took to place these children into forever homes, reducing the time a child waited by 30 percent. For a child, that means a month and a half less time being shuffled from foster home to foster home and from being taken in and out of school without a set routine.

In one pilot scenario, Indiana had an emergency request to place a child with a relative in Florida. Use of the system allowed both pilot States to exchange their case information the very same day, which, under the current system, could have taken weeks.

In another scenario, an urgent matter came to Florida's attention where a placement was breaking down and the child needed to be moved.

The way the interstate placement process currently works, this child could have been sent back into the overloaded foster care system and back

into temporary care arrangements for another couple of months. Instead, Florida's use of this electronic system made a long-term placement of the child possible within 48 business hours.

We can expect to see more of these positive results as use of this electronic system is expanded.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join Congressman TODD YOUNG in leading H.R. 4472, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

I joined my friend from Indiana in introducing H.R. 4472 because it would help us make progress on an important issue: reducing the barriers and delays that continue to exist when the best new home for a child is in a different State than the unsafe home the child had to leave.

Given that my Congressional District has one of the highest percentages of grandparents raising grandchildren in the Nation, followed closely by two other Congressional Districts in Illinois, child welfare issues are very personal to my constituents, to Chicago, and to my home State.

Removing barriers that delay or prevent interstate child placements is a long-time, bipartisan goal within Congress. This bill addresses an important factor in those delays: the ability of State computer systems to link up to process the paperwork. The current paper-based system is antiquated and slow.

As part of an HHS pilot project, seven States and the District of Columbia currently participate in the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise, or NEICE, an online tool that allows State office systems to talk to each other and process interstate placements more quickly. I am very proud of the fact that Illinois is one of these States.

An early evaluation found that this system reduced waiting times for affected children by about one-third. Ten other States have already announced plans to join the exchange over the next 2 years. H.R. 4472 would accelerate the number of participating States in the short run and ensure that all States participate in the long run.

The Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, George Sheldon, often emphasizes that we need to operate in kid time, not adult time, meaning that we need to recognize the urgency of restoring permanency for children in child welfare, rather than allowing adult bureaucracy to impede permanency.

Modernizing the technology to increase efficiencies and quicken placements is common sense and respects the urgency of finding permanent, loving homes for children.

I am grateful to Mr. YOUNG of Indiana for ensuring that the bill expands

upon existing progress on modernization within States and includes tribal foster care systems.

This is a good bill. I thank Mr. YOUNG and his staff for their excellent work. I am indeed pleased to join them.

I urge support to move forward on H.R. 4472.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good colleague, Mr. DAVIS, and his staff for their hard work and his leadership on this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the State of Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), who represents Notre Dame country. She is a hardworking Member from my home State.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

This bill will reduce the amount of time kids wait to be adopted, placed with relatives, or placed with foster parents when they are going to a home in another State.

The current paper-based process keeps children waiting while case-workers mail physical documents. This bill incentivizes States to connect to an electronic system that has been pilot-tested in a handful of States, including my home State of Indiana.

Getting at-risk kids into a stable, permanent environment as quickly as possible is critical to allowing them to thrive and reach their full potential. Each day they spend waiting for paperwork to be mailed back and forth is time wasted unnecessarily.

I want to thank my colleague, Congressman YOUNG of Indiana, for his leadership on this issue. I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4472 and do everything possible to get our most vulnerable children placed in a safe environment.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, while we are discussing H.R. 4472, reducing the time that it takes to process a child who might come from a different State for adoption or foster care placement, there are other issues of child welfare, one that I will mention.

The issues of child welfare have a long history of bipartisanship. In addition to the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act, I hope to engage my colleagues in addressing the substance abuse needs of families involved in child welfare.

Aside from neglect, alcohol and other drug use is the number one reason for removal from the home. More specifically, approximately one-third of cases list alcohol or other drug use as the reason for the child's removal.

What is exciting is that we have good, clear empirical evidence that certain strategies have demonstrated effectiveness. Specifically, these quality

interventions help children and families affected by substance abuse experience fewer days in care, higher reunification rates, less recurrence of child maltreatment, and better permanency over time.

I am preparing to introduce a bill that scales up these successes from smaller targeted interventions into full-scale interventions while building the research to better inform Federal policy overall.

My bill does two key things. First, it dedicated staff under Title IV-E for the coordination of substance abuse prevention and treatment services with child welfare services.

Secondly, it creates grants to expand the lessons learned from the research on smaller scale efforts to the State level, funding additional research to improve related Federal policy.

My home State of Illinois has led the Nation in addressing substance abuse issues in child welfare. We know that we need to do more to address this problem. We know that it works. And, of course, I look forward to being engaged in the development of programs and activities that would further enhance that kind of success.

Again, I want to thank Mr. YOUNG for his tremendous work on H.R. 4472.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT). He is one of the outstanding members of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I want to salute the gentleman and Mr. YOUNG for their bipartisan initiative here that would eliminate some of the current paperwork barriers that are preventing abused and neglected children from being quickly placed in safe, loving homes, which happen to be on the other side of a State border. Their coming together in this bipartisan initiative is constructive in helping some of the most vulnerable children in America.

It is unacceptable for children who already face so many challenges to have to deal with this additional hardship because the process, as it exists now, just is not working.

Based on the experience we have had with those States that were involved in a pilot program, we know that waiting times there were reduced by almost one-third.

I think, with that experience, we can move forward under this bill for an electronic information exchange that will work and will improve the times that these young people face.

While this bipartisan step is a welcome one, it should also serve as a reminder to us of all the work that remains.

Last week the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, a commission that was created with legislation that I authored back in 2012, issued its final report entitled "Within Our Reach: A National Strategy to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities."

However you count them and however you may focus on the data needed to adequately describe this problem, there are far too many children in America today who do suffer, including many who actually are killed, by abuse and neglect.

Our committee, much in the tradition of this piece of bipartisan legislation, has addressed these issues on a bipartisan basis in the past. I hope that we can do the same with the report of the Commission, that we can move forward to consider some of its recommendations, like its unanimous recommendations.

This was a bipartisan Commission appointed by President Obama and by House and Senate Democratic and Republican leaders. They came together with unanimous recommendations on a number of pieces of legislation, such as the importance of renewing the home visiting programs that go out and work with young parents that strengthen families and help them be the kind of parents they want to be.

We need an ongoing conversation here about foster care financing. The reauthorization of programs like the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program is coming up this year, and the Home Visiting Program, fully known as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, is up for renewal this next year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I hope we can find ways to work together to advance what has been done here and to advance specific legislation that will help reduce the number of children that suffer from abuse and neglect.

I must note, though, that at the same time this legislation was approved in our committee, under the Republican budget, the Social Services Block Grant was terminated. I hope that is not done by the Congress as a whole.

The Social Services Block Grant is a major source of funding for prevention of child abuse and neglect today, used by State and local governments to focus on prevention with far too little focus on prevention overall.

One of the major conclusions of this Commission on Child Fatalities is that we focus our attention so much on the end, after the abuse has occurred, and not on the beginning, to try to prevent abuse. We need to focus on prevention. So at the same time this bill was approved, that support was cut.

Hopefully, Congress will reject the bill to eliminate the Social Services Block Grant and we can come together to find more resources to do what must be done to prevent us from just lurching from one tragedy to another and help stabilize and support families working to see that children are protected. I thank the gentlemen again for their effort.

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Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to associate my remarks with those just made by Mr. DOGGETT relative to continuing the Social Services Block Grant funding, which has provided a tremendous amount of resources, and continues to do so, for social welfare programs, including those affecting children.

I also want to associate myself with the comments made relative to the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. It just happens that one of the judges from my district, the presiding judge of the Child Protection Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, serves on that commission and, of course, had some findings that were different than the commission report.

I think we need to consider all of those things as we move forward. But I am pleased to note that we are indeed making progress dealing with the issues of child welfare.

Again, I want to commend Mr. YOUNG and his staff for their work on H.R. 4472. I am pleased to join, and urge strong support for it.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bipartisan, bicameral bill was developed through a yearlong process, consulting with key stakeholders to make sure that there would be broad support. It involved a whole lot of painstaking work from staff members on the committee, both Republican and Democrat, and from Mr. DAVIS, who I commend once again for his leadership on this issue, and his staff. And I want to thank all of the stakeholders involved.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support from the American Public Human Services Association, the Children's Home Society of America, the Partnership for Strong Families, the Child Welfare League of America, the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, and the County Welfare Directors Association of California.

ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATORS OF THE INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN,

Washington, DC, February 4, 2016.

Re Support for H.R. 4472, "Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act".

Hon. TODD YOUNG, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. DANNY DAVIS, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES YOUNG AND DAVIS: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and its affiliate, the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (AAICPC), which represents state executives

responsible for overseeing the interstate placement of children, would like to thank you for introducing and co-sponsoring H.R. 4472, Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

This legislation will facilitate state participation in the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE), which is modernizing the now antiquated Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) administrative process. The bill complements our efforts to transform the ICPC by promoting policy changes and providing funding so that states may connect to the NEICE. Once fully operationalized, the NEICE will also be a valuable tool for addressing societal challenges that put children at risk, including the opiate and heroin epidemic, illegal rehousing of children, and sex trafficking.

Thank you again for introducing and co-sponsoring H.R. 4472, and for your steadfast leadership to improve the lives of children waiting for safe, permanent families. We strongly support your efforts to modernize the interstate placement of children through this legislation, and intend to work vigorously for its passage.

Sincerely yours,

TRACY WAREING EVANS, Executive Director, APHSA.

MICAL ANNE PETERSON, President, AAICPC.

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY, OF AMERICA, Chicago, IL, January 19, 2016.

Congressman TODD YOUNG, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN YOUNG: Children's Home Society of America (CHSA) is proud to support the efforts of Congressman Young as he proposes to modernize and expedite the ability of states to place children across state lines and into forever homes.

The Modernizing and Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act will replace an antiquated paper based system enabling not only greater efficiencies in the legal process of placing children but also create greater transparency and accountability in the overall process. By utilizing a nationwide computer based system, states will actually save money by reducing the administrative costs associated with complying with the ICPC, expedite communication between states and their placement systems and most importantly, reduce the time that children spend in the foster care system.

CHSA looks forward to supporting Congressman Young as he understands that no child should have to wait to be placed in a loving home simply because they must cross state lines.

Sincerely,

SHARON OSBORNE, BOARD CHAIR, Children's Home Society of America.

STRONG FAMILIES, INC., Gainesville, FL, March 4, 2016.

Re Support for H.R. 4472, Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

Hon. TODD YOUNG, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. DANNY DAVIS, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES YOUNG AND DAVIS: First, many thanks for introducing and co-sponsoring H.R. 4472, Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act. As the Immediate Past President of the

Association of Administrators of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, it generates much excitement to see this legislation introduced. In a past position, I was the ICPC Compact Administrator for the State of Florida and had the opportunity to help develop the prototype for the electronic transmission process now realized through NEICE. It was our dream in Florida that one day this system could become a national reality. Good or bad, I must also confess that the acronym NEICE was my suggestion so in a couple of ways I feel like a parent to NEICE.

There is no doubt in my mind that implementation of this system in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands will change the lives of thousands of children who await placement with relatives or adoption finalization in another state. The additional uses for NEICE are subject only to the minds of those who can identify other possibilities such as combating human trafficking cases and unregulated custody transfers (rehousing).

Thank you again for introducing and co-sponsoring H.R. 4472, and for your steadfast leadership to improve the lives of children waiting for safe, permanent families. The child welfare community strongly supports your efforts to modernize the interstate placement of children through this legislation, and intends to work vigorously for its passage.

Sincerely yours,

STEPHEN PENNYPACKER, Esq., President and CEO.

MARCH 4, 2016.

Hon. CHARLES GRASSLEY, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. TODD YOUNG, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN YOUNG AND SENATOR GRASSLEY: The Child Welfare League of America offers its endorsement of your legislation, H.R. 4472 and S. 2574. The Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

We have long recognized the critical role that interstate placement of children has played in the timely placement of children in foster care and kinship care as well as its importance in promoting adoptions. Over the years it has become increasingly clear that these placements have been delayed to the significant detriment of children in need of permanence.

The recent efforts by the Department of Health and Human Services through the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise or NEICE pilot project has demonstrated significant speed up in these interstate placements with some children seeing there wait times reduced by weeks and months. In addition, the system has reduced cost and paper work. The six pilot states that utilized NEICE demonstrated wait times reduced by 30% with participating states savings of \$1.6 million per year in reduced copying, mailing, and administrative costs.

We solute your leaders on this legislation and are equally pleased by the bipartisan spirit as represented by the original co-sponsorship of Congressman Davis, Congresswoman Brooks, Senator Gillibrand, Senator Franken and Senator Peters.

Thank you for your work and advocacy on behalf of children.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE JAMES-BROWN, President/CEO, Child Welfare League of America.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ADOPTION ATTORNEYS, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY ATTORNEYS,

Washington, DC, February 16, 2016.

Hon. TODD YOUNG,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: I write as the President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys to enthusiastically endorse H.R. 4472 on behalf of our organization. H.R. 4472 is a bill that provides swift stability and permanency to vulnerable children who are being placed in foster/adoptive homes or with guardians across state lines.

Drafted in 1960, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children ("ICPC") exists to ensure protection for children in interstate placements. The ICPC requires every placement to be scrutinized for legality and appropriateness. It requires that children remain in the state of origin for weeks, or even months, while the required paperwork is mailed from the placing state ICPC's office to the new parent's home state's ICPC office.

The ICPC is well meaning, but by its very nature, slows down the process due to the paperwork and mailing burdens. A uniform legal framework offers valuable protections, but such protections must be weighed against the significant burden it imposes on children and families. With the advances in technology that have been used by other state and federal agencies for over a decade, the process can be significantly shortened and the most vulnerable members of our society can be provided permanency in stable loving homes. The centralized electronic system created by the passage of H.R. 4472 will be a victory for children, by expanding an electronic pilot program to all state and U.S. territories.

The pilot program has been an unqualified success. Since the pilot program was launched, the placement time for children placed through those pilot states has been reduced by 30 percent. Placement time has been reduced by 11 days. As a truly centralized system evolves, the efficiencies should be better and better.

The current slow ICPC process causes weeks, and sometimes months, of children languishing in their states of original residence. Social science and neuroscience research has confirmed that children need stable families to thrive. The paperwork barrier to quick foster/adoptive placements creates unnecessarily delays. One month in the life of a child at this vulnerable stage is an eternity. Further, the delay caused by an outdated mailing system can result in significant developmental issues and treatment costs. In many instances, such treatment costs are incurred by local, state and federal governments. Prospective parents willing to provide homes to children in need of families have been subjected to placement processes that are extraordinarily difficult, risky, expensive and time consuming; often requiring months of persistence and intervention by members of Congress. Most significantly, the number of unparented children able to find families has been severely limited while the life potential of those fortunate enough to find families through foster care, guardianship and adoption has been impaired by weeks and months of needless delay.

Reform must begin with our government's acknowledgement that every child has a fundamental human right to be raised in a permanent loving family and that foster care, guardianship and adoption are an important means for providing such families to children living outside of parental care. Additionally, by eliminating this unnecessary delay, H.R. 4472 will reduce the treatment costs incurred by local, state and federal governments.

We have come together as a community of child advocates to identify a process that

will reform interstate adoption. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our request with you and members of your staff. Please note, the changes we are endorsing would have little budget impact. We look forward to working with you in support of swift passage of this bill. To simplify your communication with us, please feel free to contact our Director of Adoption, Denise Bierly on behalf of our group.

Sincerely,

HERB BRAIL,
President,

American Academy of Adoption Attorneys.

COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION,
Sacramento, CA.

Re Support for H.R. 4472, "Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act".

Hon. TODD YOUNG,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. DANNY DAVIS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES YOUNG AND DAVIS: The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), representing the human services directors in California's 58 counties, supports the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

The bill will modernize the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) administrative process by replacing it with a successfully tested web-based electronic case processing system. The new National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) will change policies and provide funding to enable states and counties to connect to the NEICE to exchange data and documents across state jurisdictions so that our agencies may meet the unique needs of foster care children who may reside in another state. The proposed data exchange will enable state and counties more efficiently meet federal mandates for the timely services, placement and permanence of children in the foster care system, and will improve outcomes for children in foster care and their families.

Thank you again for introducing and co-sponsoring H.R. 4472. Please contact Tom Joseph, Director of CWDA's Washington Office, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

FRANK J. MECCA,
Executive Director.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those stakeholders once again for all their help in getting this across the finish line.

I am hoping for broad and fulsome support from all Members of this Chamber. I hope we can all agree here today that we should do everything possible to get our most vulnerable children immediately placed into the setting that is best for them, regardless of State boundary lines.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4472, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOT ARLINGTON INURNMENT RESTORATION ACT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4336) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the burial of the cremated remains of persons who served as Women's Air Forces Service Pilots in Arlington National Cemetery, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4336

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY OF CERTAIN PERSONS WHOSE SERVICE IS DEEMED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2410 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(c)(1) The Secretary of the Army shall ensure that under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the cremated remains of any person described in paragraph (2) are eligible for inurnment in Arlington National Cemetery with military honors in accordance with section 1491 of title 10.

"(2) A person described in this paragraph is a person whose service has been determined to be active duty service pursuant to section 401 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202; 38 U.S.C. 106 note) as of the date of the enactment of this paragraph."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to—

(A) the remains of a person that are not formally interred or inurned as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) a person who dies on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) FORMALLY INTERRED OR INURNED DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "formally interred or inurned" means interred or inurned in a cemetery, crypt, mausoleum, columbarium, niche, or other similar formal location.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON CAPACITY OF ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the interment and inurnment capacity of Arlington National Cemetery, including—

(1) the estimated date that the Secretary determines the cemetery will reach maximum interment and inurnment capacity; and

(2) in light of the unique and iconic meaning of the cemetery to the United States, recommendations for legislative actions and nonlegislative options that the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that the maximum interment and inurnment capacity of the cemetery is not reached until well into the future, including such actions and options with respect to—

(A) redefining eligibility criteria for interment and inurnment in the cemetery; and

(B) considerations for additional expansion opportunities beyond the current boundaries of the cemetery.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.