



September 26, 2017

The Honorable U.S. Senators  
United States Senate Finance Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Graham/Cassidy/Heller/Johnson healthcare bill: OPPOSE

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members:

I write on behalf of the National Organization of State Associations for Children, to share our opposition to the Graham/Cassidy/Heller/Johnson bill. We believe that the substantial cuts to Medicaid authorized by this legislation would be devastating to vulnerable children and families and would undercut efforts to reduce the number of children in foster care.

NOSAC is the only national organization that exclusively represents state associations comprised of over 1500 private agencies that provide care, treatment, services and support for vulnerable children, youth, and families. Our member associations' members are the ones who are in the community daily with foster children, their foster and birth families, and individuals suffering from opioid or other addictions.

We know from experience that Medicaid is a critical children's health care insurance program, serving 1 in 4 American children. Children in foster care, 99 percent of whom receive their physical and behavioral health coverage through Medicaid, have such unique vulnerabilities and health disparities that the American Academy of Pediatrics classifies them as a population of children with special health care needs. One third of children in foster care have a chronic medical condition, and 60 percent of those under age 5 have developmental health issues. Up to 80 percent of children entering foster care have a significant mental health need. Medicaid is vital to meeting those needs.

The proposed per capita caps on Medicaid in this bill would limit the amount of federal dollars states receive based on a formula set to a specific year. By 2026, states will lose \$215 billion in federal Medicaid matching dollars. States will be responsible for covering costs that are not considered in the formula, thereby creating incentives to reduce health care benefits and spending on care for our most vulnerable children. It would effectively destroy the Medicaid entitlement and reduce access to EPSDT benefits for all eligible children, including foster children.

Children removed from their parents and unable to receive treatment for their chronic behavioral and physical health conditions would be difficult to place in foster and kinship caregiver homes,

leading to increased youth homelessness and to placements in more restrictive and more expensive settings. Families adopting children out of foster care, moreover, would be less likely to consider these adoptions without the assurance of Medicaid to meet their children's complex health needs.

We strongly and respectfully encourage you to vote "no" on the Graham/Cassidy/Heller/Johnson bill. Protect vulnerable children and ensure they have the medical care they need to grow up to be productive citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michelle M. Sanborn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" being more prominent and the last name "Sanborn" following in a similar style.

Michelle M. Sanborn

President

National Organization of State Associations for Children (NOSAC)

<http://www.nosac.org>