

March 13, 2014

Dear Senator,

I am writing on behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), regarding the upcoming vote to reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) – S. 1086. FFCC is a bipartisan organization that advocates directly for legislative change in Congress to ensure that children and families are the priority in federal policy and budget decisions.

We are writing to urge your opposition to S.Amdt.2820, an amendment sponsored by Senator Lee that would require SSNs for children to receive the benefits under CCDBG.

The amendment would require parents to provide the social security numbers of children who apply for child care assistance before a family can receive the child care benefit. This amendment will force states to implement undue bureaucratic and costly changes to their child care assistance processes, and will make it more difficult for the most vulnerable families to receive child care assistance.

This amendment is also unnecessary. Undocumented children are already barred from receiving subsidies and state lead agencies must verify the citizenship and immigration status of all children who apply for CCDBG. Proof of citizenship and immigration status is determined by requiring forms like birth certificates and passports, and some states make it option to include a social security number. In order to implement this amendment, states would be required to change child care applications, subsidy eligibility manuals, and re-train eligibility intake staff, among other costly actions. In fact, many states have moved toward electronic applications in order to streamline eligibility decisions and improve program integrity. It would be even more costly for these states to make changes to their applications.

Many families face challenges in obtaining a social security card. The most vulnerable families have difficulty accessing record and proper identity documents to obtain a social security card or replacement card. Moreover, many qualified immigrant children such as victims of trafficking and domestic violence also face challenges with obtaining a timely social security number. These families will face delays in obtaining child care assistance, which has the potential to lead to more children in unsafe care while their parents work in order to provide for them.

S. 1086 is a bipartisan bill that recognizes that child care is vital for helping parents work and children develop and learn. This amendment runs counter to that intent by placing additional burdens on states and making it harder for children and families to get this vital child care assistance. Please vote no if S.Amdt. 2820 comes up for a vote and keep child care accessible to the families that need it most.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley
President