

January 4, 2015

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Stivers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Loebsack  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Portman  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Davis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Portman, Representative Stivers, Representative Davis and Representative Loebsack,

We are writing on behalf of over 400 national, state, and local organizations to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2015 (S 256/H 576). As organizations committed to securing a bright future for children and youth, we applaud efforts to amend the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s definition of homelessness to include children and youth who are verified as homeless by other federal program personnel, and to restore decision-making to local communities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there were over 1.3 million homeless children and youth enrolled in public school in the 2013-2014 school year. Yet many of these children and youth are not able to access HUD services such as transitional housing and other wraparound services because HUD's current definition of homelessness excludes children, youth, and families who are living in motels or temporarily with others because they have nowhere else to go.

These situations are chaotic, unstable, overcrowded, and often dangerous, resulting in negative emotional and health outcomes for children and youth, as well as putting them at risk of physical and sexual abuse and trafficking. Yet HUD's regulations impose requirements for multiple moves and long periods of homelessness, as well as extensive documentation and recordkeeping requirements before children, youth, and their families are eligible for HUD homeless assistance.

This legislation would amend HUD's definition of homelessness to include children and youth who are verified as homeless by federal program personnel from federal programs such as: school district liaisons designated under the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, Head Start programs, Runaway and Homeless Youth programs, Early Intervention programs, Violence Against Women programs, and Health Care for the Homeless programs. It would create a streamlined and efficient referral process for homeless children and youth to access HUD homeless services, and provide communities with the flexibility to serve and house this vulnerable population. Public housing agencies and directors of HUD homeless assistance programs also would have the flexibility to certify families and unaccompanied youth who live in motels or temporarily with others.

In addition, the Homeless Children and Youth Act would allow – but not require - local service providers to prioritize funding for homeless families and unaccompanied youth based on the needs in their community. This legislation returns control over these decisions to local communities, who know their needs best. Finally, this legislation amends federal homeless data collection and reporting requirements to include all homeless children, youth, and families, providing an accurate and honest accounting of homelessness in America.

The failure of federal policy to allow some homeless children and youth to access homeless assistance has serious and far-reaching effects, including exclusion of these populations from critical services, continued invisibility in community planning on homelessness, and weak or non-existent coordination with key systems of care for children and youth.

We are grateful for your leadership in making homeless children and youth a legislative priority, and we look forward to working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of America's children and youth.

Sincerely,

National

Afterschool Alliance  
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking (ATEST)  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Psychological Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Advocacy Institute  
Children's Leadership Council  
Coalition for Community Schools  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Covenant House  
Every Child Matters  
Family Preservation Community Services  
Family Promise  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Food Research and Action Center  
Foster Club  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
HEAR US Inc.  
Healthy Teen Network  
Invisible People  
Justice for Families  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Education Association  
National Center for Housing and Child Welfare  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Foster Care Coalition  
National Head Start Association  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Network for Youth  
National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)  
National Safe Place Network  
National Title I Association  
National Women's Law Center  
National Youth Advocate Program  
Organizations Concerned About Rural Education  
Opportunity Action  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Rural School and Community Trust

School Social Work Association of America  
Southwest Key Programs, Inc.  
SparkAction  
The W. Haywood Burns Institute  
Western Regional Advocacy Project  
Youth Villages

### Regional

Community Technology Alliance  
Elev8  
Inland Empire Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Janus Youth Programs  
MANY  
New England Head Start Association  
Region IX Head Start Association  
Region X Head Start Association

### Alabama

Children's Aid Society  
Morgan County System of Services

### Alaska

Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness  
Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness  
Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption  
Juneau Youth Services

### Arizona

Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services (Project ALWAYS)  
Children's Action Alliance  
Homeless Youth Connection (Goodyear)  
Kiwanis of North Phoenix  
Northland Family Help Center (Flagstaff)  
Our Family Services (Tucson)  
UMOM New Day Centers  
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona  
Valley of the Sun United Way (Phoenix)

### Arkansas

North Little Rock School District  
Youth Bridge (Northwest Arkansas)

### California

Bill Wilson Center (San Jose)  
Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (Oakland)  
California Coalition for Youth  
Center for Health Justice (Los Angeles)  
Charities Housing  
Children Now  
City of Sunnyvale  
CIYMCA – Noah's Anchorage Youth Crisis Shelter (Santa Barbara)  
Coalition on Homelessness (San Francisco)

Community Housing Partnership (San Francisco)  
Community Human Services of Monterey County  
Compass Point (San Francisco)  
The Ed Ladder (San Diego)  
East Oakland Community Project  
Episcopal Sanctuary (San Francisco)  
Family Assistance Program (Victorville)  
Family and Youth Roundtable (San Diego)  
Fertig, Gold & Leiberman (Santa Monica)  
Gale Kuns Ministries, Inc. (Visalia)  
Hamilton Family Center (San Francisco)  
Hayward Community Action Network (Hayward)  
Homeless Prenatal Program (San Francisco)  
Home Start (San Diego)  
Interface Children & Family Services (Camarillo)  
Jamestown School District (Jamestown)  
Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco)  
Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (San Jose)  
Los Angeles Community Action Center  
Merced River Elementary School District (Winton)  
New Beginnings Counseling Center (Santa Barbara)  
New Morning Youth & Family Services (Placerville)  
Project YES (Modesto)  
Redwood Community Action Agency Youth Service Bureau (Eureka)  
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness  
San Diego Adolescent Pregnant and Parenting Program  
San Diego Youth Services  
Sanctuary of Hope (Los Angeles)  
School on Wheels  
Social Advocates for Youth (Santa Rosa)  
South County Collaborative (Gilroy)  
South Los Angeles TAY and Foster Care Collaborative (Los Angeles)  
Transition House (Santa Barbara)  
United Way of Ventura County  
Ventura Unified School District (Ventura)  
The Village Family Services (North Hollywood)  
Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Youth Spirit Artworks (Berkeley)

### Colorado

Attention Homes (Boulder)  
Bus Stop Ministries (Denver)  
Homeless Education Network with Denver Public Schools (Denver)  
School District 27J (Brighton)  
Urban Peak Colorado Springs  
Urban Peak Denver

### Connecticut

Bethel AME Church (Bridgeport)  
Council of Churches (Bridgeport)  
First United Church of Christ (Bridgeport)  
Generation Joshua Outreach Ministry (Bridgeport)  
Janus Center for Youth In Crisis (Bridgeport)  
Joseph's Coat of Many Colors (Bridgeport)  
Jesse Lee United Methodist Church (Easton)

Kids in Crisis (Greenwich)  
Salem Lutheran Church (Bridgeport)  
Saugatuck Congregational Church (Westport)  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Fairfield)  
Unity Hill (Trumbull)

#### Delaware

YWCA Delaware

#### District of Columbia

Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.  
StandUp for Kids

#### Florida

Capital City Youth Services (Tallahassee)  
Children Across America Florida  
Community Research Team, University of Miami  
Covenant House (Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando)  
Educate Tomorrow (Miami)  
Family Resources, Inc.  
Florida Network of Youth and Family Services  
Highlands County Coalition for the Homeless (Sebring)  
Hope Community Outreach (Citra)  
Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team of Palm Beach County (Belle Glade)  
Interfaith Emergency Services (Ocala)  
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County  
Last Call for Help/JOER Cares (Homosassa Springs)  
Sepielli Consulting Group, LLC (Hollywood)  
Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. (New Port Richey)  
Turning Points (Bradenton)

#### Georgia

Fulton County Schools – Program for Children and Youth in Transition  
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness  
Sconiers Homeless Preventive Organization, Inc. (Riverdale)  
StandUp for Kids (Atlanta)  
Unheard Voices  
Young Adult Guidance Center, Inc. (Atlanta)

#### Hawaii

Good Beginnings Alliance

#### Illinois

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless  
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.  
Illinois Collaboration on Youth  
Illinois Head Start Association  
The Night Ministry (Chicago)  
Project Oz (Bloomington)  
Youth Service Bureau (Springfield)

#### Indiana

Alternatives Incorporated (Anderson)  
Crisis Center, Inc., a Youth Service Bureau (Gary)  
Evanston/Skokie Consolidated School District 65 (Evanston)  
Indianapolis Public Schools (Indianapolis)  
Kids in Crisis Intervention Team (Franklin)  
School on Wheels (Indianapolis)  
Stopover, Inc. (Indianapolis)  
Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County, Inc. (South Bend)  
Youth Service Bureau (Bloomington)  
Youth Service Bureau of Monroe County

#### Iowa

Winterset Community School District (Winterset)  
Youth and Shelter Services, Inc (Ames)

#### Kansas

Hillcrest Traditional Housing  
Kids'TLC (Olathe)  
Turner Unified School District #202 (Kansas City)  
USD383 Manhattan-Ogden (Manhattan)  
Wyandotte Homeless Services Coalition/Wyandotte County Continuum of Care

#### Kentucky

Covington Independent Public Schools (Covington)  
Emerging Workforce Initiative (Louisville)  
Family & Children's Place (Louisville)  
Homeless & Housing Coalition of Kentucky  
Indian Trail Elementary Family Resource Center (Louisville)  
Kentucky Youth Advocates  
YMCA Safe Place Services (Louisville)

#### Louisiana

Educational & Treatment Council, Inc. (Lake Charles)  
Greater Light Ministries  
Pierre A. Capdau Charter School (New Orleans)

#### Maine

Home Counselors, Inc. (Rockland)  
New Beginnings (Lewiston)  
Preble Street  
Shaw House (Bangor)

#### Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth  
Maryland Head Start Association  
Petercares House  
Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County

#### Massachusetts

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

Massachusetts Head Start Association  
YouthHarbors (Waltham)

### Michigan

Common Ground (Bloomfield Hills)  
Corporation for Artistic Development (Detroit)  
Cypress Place (Port Huron)  
Detroit Public Schools (Detroit)  
Gateway Community Services (Lansing)  
Mason County Public Schools (Scottsville)  
Matrix Human Services (Detroit)  
Mecosta Osceola Youth Attention Center (Big Rapids)  
Staircase Youth Services (Ludington)  
The Connection Youth Services (Howell)  
The Corner Health Center (Ypsilanti)  
The Harbor (Port Huron)  
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan (Ypsilanti)

### Minnesota

Avenues for Homeless Youth (Minneapolis)  
Eagles Vista Ranch & Wellness Center (Bemidji)  
Face to Face Health and Counseling Service, Inc (St. Paul)  
Hope 4 Youth (Anoka)  
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc. (Fridley)  
Lutheran Social Service  
Lutheran Social Service – Lakes Area Youth Services (Brainerd)  
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (St. Paul)  
Minnesota Head Start Association  
Oasis for Youth (Bloomington)  
The Bridge for Youth (Minneapolis)  
The Link (Minneapolis/St. Paul)  
Teens Alone (Hopkins)  
YouthLink (Minneapolis)

### Missouri

Synergy Services (Kansas City)

### Montana

ChildWise Institute (Helena)  
Missoula County Public Schools (Missoula)  
School District 5, Kalispell  
School District 50, Evergreen  
Sparrow's Nest Northwest Montana  
United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area (Helena)  
Youth Homes, Inc. (Missoula)

### Nebraska

Youth Emergency Services (Omaha)

### Nevada

Civil Rights for Seniors (Reno)  
The Community Foundation of Western Nevada (Reno)

The Eddy House/YOUth Resource Center (Reno)  
Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth  
Nevada Youth Empowerment Project (Reno)  
The Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (Reno)  
Southern Nevada Children First  
Washoe Legal Services (Reno)

#### New Hampshire

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire  
Every Child Matters in New Hampshire  
Winnacunnet High School (Hampton)

#### New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Center for Family Services (Camden)  
Community Access Unlimited (Elizabeth)

#### New Mexico

High Mountain Youth Project of Lincoln County (Ruidoso)  
Las Cruces Public Schools Project Link Homeless Education  
New Mexico Voices for Children

#### New York

Ali Forney Center  
brainpower.me (Bronx)  
Catholic Charities of Herkimer County  
Center for Youth (Rochester)  
Citizens Committee for Children of New York  
CMCS Sunrise Drop In Center (Bronx)  
Coalition for Homeless Youth  
Compass House (Buffalo)  
Episcopal Social Services/Safe Space  
Good Shepherd Services  
Hetrick-Martin Institute (New York)  
Metropolitan Community Church of NY Charities  
Sanctuary (Huntington)  
The Center for Youth Services (Rochester)  
The Franciscan Center (Buffalo)  
Youth Bureau of Ulster County

#### North Carolina

Carolina Outreach Foundation (Durham)  
Coalition to End Homelessness (Durham)  
Genesis Home, Inc. (Durham)  
Haven House Inc.  
Only Hope Wnc, Inc. (Hendersonville)  
Triangle Empowerment Center (Durham)

#### North Dakota

Youthworks (Bismarck and Fargo)

## Ohio

Central Ohio Mental Health Center (Delaware)  
Columbus Literacy Council  
Compass Family and Community Services/Daybreak  
Daybreak (Dayton)  
Dayton Public Schools (Dayton)  
Easter Seals Northern Ohio (Elyria)  
Help Me Grow (Akron)  
Highland County Help me Grow (Hillsboro)  
House of Hope for Alcoholics, Inc. (Columbus)  
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Bath)  
Lighthouse Youth Services (Cincinnati)  
Mothers Assisting Mothers, Inc. (Akron)  
Non Profit Evolution, Inc. (Columbus)  
Ohio Afterschool Network  
Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association  
Center for Community Solutions  
Voices for Ohio's Children  
Yinovate, LLC (Cleveland)

## Oklahoma

Ardmore City Schools Student Services Program (Ardmore)  
Colchester Creek (Oklahoma City)  
Northwest Family Services, Inc. (Alva)  
Positive Tomorrows (Oklahoma City)  
Youth Services for Stephens County, Inc.  
Youth Services of Tulsa

## Oregon

Oregon Head Start Association  
Beaverton School District (Beaverton)  
Right 2 Survive (Portland)  
Salem-Keizer Public Schools Students in Transition Educational Program  
Sisters of the Road (Portland)  
St. Mary's Center (Alameda)  
Street Roots (Portland)  
Yamhill Community Action Partnership (McMinnville)

## Pennsylvania

ArtXpression, Inc. (Pittsburgh)  
Berks Coalition to End Homelessness (Berks County)  
Beverly's Birthdays (Pittsburgh)  
City of Erie, PA, School District (Erie)  
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
Education Law Center - PA (Pittsburgh)  
Groundwork Partners (Philadelphia)  
Health Care for the Homeless (Pittsburgh)  
Homeless Advocacy Project (Philadelphia)  
Homeless Children's Education Fund (Pittsburgh)  
Juvenile Law Center (Philadelphia)  
PathWays PA (Holmes)  
People's Emergency Center (Philadelphia)

Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network  
PolicyLab at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Sheller Family Foundation (Philadelphia)  
Shelter Project (Philadelphia)  
Valley Youth House (Philadelphia)  
Village of Arts and Humanities (Philadelphia)  
Women Against Abuse, Inc. (Philadelphia)  
Youth Emergency Service (Philadelphia)

#### Rhode Island

Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
Crossroads (Providence)  
Sherlock Center on Disabilities (Providence)

#### South Carolina

Family Preservation Community Services

#### South Dakota

Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition (Rapid City)

#### Tennessee

Friends and Neighbors (Kingsport)  
G.I.R.L.S. Ranch (Murfreesboro)  
Kingsport City Schools Homeless Education Program (Kingsport)  
Murfreesboro-Rutherford County Homeless Task Force  
Oasis Center (Nashville)  
The Oasis of Kingsport (Kingsport)  
Safe Haven (Nashville)

#### Texas

Advocacy Outreach (Elgin)  
Centro San Vicente (El Paso)  
Connections Individual and Family Services  
Families in Crisis, Inc. (Killeen)  
Grayson County Juvenile Alternatives, Inc. (Sherman)  
Harlandale Independent School District (San Antonio)  
Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults – Youth Services Division  
K'STAR, Inc. (Kerrville)  
Montgomery County Homeless Coalition (Conroe)  
Montgomery County Youth Services (Conroe)  
Promise House, Inc. (Dallas)  
Rainbow Days, Inc. (Dallas)  
Region 19 Education Service Center (El Paso)  
Second Chance Technology Edge (Houston)  
Texans Care for Children  
Victoria Area Homeless Coalition  
Victoria Independent School District KIDZ Connection  
Waco Independent School District, Homeless Outreach

#### Utah

Wasatch Mental Health (Provo)  
Voices for Utah's Children

Volunteers of America (Salt Lake City)

Vermont

Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs

Virginia

Alternative House (Fairfax and Vienna)  
Henrico County Public Schools  
New Vision Youth Services, Inc. (Chesapeake)  
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Children's Alliance  
Cocoon House (Everett)  
Community Youth Services (Olympia)  
Friends of Youth (Kirkland)  
Housing Options for Students in Transition (Shelton)  
Northwest Youth Services (Bellingham)  
The Mockingbird Society  
Ryan's House for Youth (Freeland)  
YMCA of Greater Seattle  
YouthCare (Seattle)

West Virginia

West Virginia Head Start Association

Wisconsin

CAP Services' Family Crisis Center  
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
Couleecap, Inc. (Westby)  
Human Development Center (Superior)  
Kids in Need Youth Program (Rhineland)  
Lutheran Social Services (Baraboo)  
Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.  
Project 16:49 (Beloit)  
Walker's Point Youth and Family Center (Milwaukee)  
WI Association for Runaway Services  
WI Council on Children and Families  
Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin

Wyoming

Campbell County School District (Gillette)  
Casper Housing Authority (Casper)  
Laramie County School District # 1  
UPLIFT (Cheyenne)