



Date: September 4, 2018

To: Members of the Coalition of Residential Excellence

From: Don Forrester, Executive Director

Subject: August 2018 CORE Monthly Report

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## YOU ARE INVITED

### **OVERVIEW OF FAMILIES FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT- SEPTEMBER 7, 2018 [CONFERENCE CALL AT 3:00 P.M. EST]**

Arrangements are set for a conference call on Friday, September 7, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. (EST). The following staff members in Washington, D.C. will be providing an overview of the Families First Prevention Services Act:

- Ryan T.F. Martin, Senior Human Services Advisor, Majority, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
- Anne DeCesaro, Majority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Human Resources, U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means
- Morna Miller, Minority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Human Resources, U.S. House Committee on Ways and means.

The conference call number is (855) 428-0808 Conference ID: 641899

If you've not yet confirmed your interest in participating in this call, please send me an email and I will add your name to the list. Mr. Martin plans to send me a PowerPoint tomorrow or Thursday. I will then distribute the PowerPoint to those who've indicated an interest.

The PowerPoint will serve as a frame of reference as provisions of the FFPSA are highlighted in the conference call. There will be a time for questions following the overview.

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### **Hotel reservations for 2018 CORE National Conference**

**Deadline for making hotel reservations and receiving the conference rate is September 7, 2018**

THE HOTEL REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR THE BLOCK OF ROOMS FOR THE 2018 CORE NATIONAL CONFERENCE IS SEPTEMBER 7, 2018. RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 7, 2018 TO GET THE CORE CONFERENCE RATE OF \$139.00 A Night.

The Hotel Indigo is the primary conference hotel. I suspect that only one or two rooms are available. The \$139 rate is good Monday, October 8-Wednesday, October 10. Reservations for Thursday, October 11 is \$179. To make a reservation call (254) 754-7000 (Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm) and ask for a Sales Representative. Indicate you are with the CORE conference to get the aforementioned rate.

The Marriott Courtyard Hotel is a secondary hotel for the conference. They, too, are offering the conference rate of \$139 a night for any night between October 8-11, 2018. Reservations

for the Marriott Courtyard Hotel can be made using the following link:

[https://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkIdData=CORE%5EWCOCY%60CORCORA%7CCORCORB%60139.00%60USD%60false%606%6010/8/18%6010/11/18%609/17/18&app=resvlink&stop\\_mobi=yes](https://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkIdData=CORE%5EWCOCY%60CORCORA%7CCORCORB%60139.00%60USD%60false%606%6010/8/18%6010/11/18%609/17/18&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes)

In addition, registration for the 2018 CORE National Conference is available at [www.CORE-DC.org](http://www.CORE-DC.org) [Note: Several folks registered for the hotels have not yet registered for the conference]

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### **Nominee for Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families**

In March of this year, President Trump announced Elizabeth Darling as his choice for appointment as the Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Darling, served as head of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at HHS during President George W. Bush Administration. Her work-related experiences on either side of that role are equally impressive.

The confirmation of the appointment must be approved by the Senate. On August 22, 2018, Senator Hatch and Senator Wyden made opening statements to the Senate Committee on Finance before testimony was received from either of the two nominees being presented. Senator Hatch said of Ms. Darling: "Ms. Darling has a broad range of experience at the federal, state, and local levels, especially in areas fostering collaborating between government and community-based organization. If confirmed, Ms. Darling will oversee two important child welfare agencies within HHS".

If confirmed by the Senate, Ms. Darling will oversee the Children's Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau that address issues associated to child abuse and neglect, foster care and adoption, homeless and runaway youth, trafficked youth, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic violence.

Ms. Darling's opening statement to the Senate Finance Committee shared insight into personal glimpses of her life. Acknowledging that her life was filled with

opportunity, she credited her parents as having a strong work ethic and an unwavering sense of personal responsibility.

She shared that her dad was orphaned at the age of eight and grew up in a children's home. Just as he was aging out of care, he found a foster family. She said of him: "He was a living example of the hope that a stable, loving foster family can bring to the life of a child. Almost eighty years later, this foster family is still a large part of my life".

She credited her father's experience with influencing the decision she and her husband made at the age of twenty-eight to adopt a sixteen-year-old from a group foster home sponsored by their church. She said of the experience: "He came to us after years of unimaginable abuse and over the next ten years as he sought to overcome its effects, we stood firm in our love - and plenty of it was tough love and enforced consequences – he learned to take responsibility for the man he chose to be. I am very proud of who he is today, as I am of all three of my children."

She spoke of the importance of relationships and the capacity of the non-profit community to provide what government can't. She talked about the one-on-one supportive dynamic that can be found through extended family, a place of worship, a community center, a school, a teacher, a coach, a pastor, a mentor.

I was favorably impressed with her testimony. Certainly, from an experiential level, she is fully aware of the challenges associated to working with children and families from hard places. She also has been involved at a very grass-roots level in understanding the challenges and triumphs of working through difficulties to provide a lasting hope that promotes healing.

### **A Divided Opinion – A Nation Divided**

I am sharing the following mostly because I think it is relevant and I find it interesting. It casts light on some of the potential threats related to children's services. It also vividly highlights the level of chaos and pandemonium present on Capitol Hill. The overall lack of respect and civility between leadership in government is disturbing. A nation divided cannot stand.

From a bipartisan perspective, I am simply seeing that the level of stress in Washington, regardless of its origin, has to be difficult to manage on a day-to-day basis. It also poses a challenge to folks attempting to express views or influence legislative outcomes.

Senator Wyden's presentation before the Senate Finance Committee on August 22, 2018 highlights an example of what I'm talking about. Senator Wyden's opening comment was powerfully impactful. His prepared text expressed it this way: "The gods have a way of dropping Earth-shaking news right before Finance Committee hearings. This morning's hearing is no different, and the news that broke last night about the prosecutions of two Trump associates now has ramifications for one of the nominations before the committee today. [Nominee for Treasury Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy – notation added by me].

"The president's personal lawyer and his former campaign chairman are confessed or convicted felons. They join a long and growing list of Trump associates who've broken the law. Mr. Manafort, relevant to this committee, stole from every American taxpayer when he committed tax fraud. Mr. Cohen's crimes are also relevant to our investigative work in multiple areas. But the Trump Treasury department is continuing to stonewall this committee's attempts to investigate these matters of criminal tax evasion, corruption and foreign influence in our elections. That's why I'm maintaining holds on all Treasury nominations."

There was much more shared by Senator Wyden regarding his perceptions and observations related to efficacy of the current administration. He then turned his

attention to the nomination of Ms. Elizabeth Darling. "Ms. Elizabeth Darling is nominated to serve as commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. Over the last few years, the Finance Committee worked extensively on a bipartisan basis to pass the largest overhaul of our child welfare system in decades. If confirmed, Ms. Darling will have a big role to play in implementing that legislation, so both side of this of this committee will look forward to working with her on that front."

"But in the meantime, I'm concerned that the Trump administration is turning its attention toward proposals that would undo much of the progress that's been made with respect to child welfare. First, there is an effort by this administration to slash child welfare funding in the long-run. It's the same type of hit-job the president's budget-crunchers want to inflict on Medicaid – capping funding and crippling the ability of states to serve many of the most vulnerable youngsters and families out there".

"There's also an attempt underway to allow child welfare providers to discriminate against potential foster parents simply because they are LGBTQ Americans or people of particular faith backgrounds. The acting head of the Administration for Children and Families says he want to move further in that direction".

"Colleagues, this is wrong. Not only is it discriminatory policy based on nothing but intolerance, it would almost certainly deny a lot of children the opportunity to grow up in safe and loving homes".

### **Legislative Issues**

- There has been no significant movement or change since last month's report on either HR 4983 – Meadows - Caring Homes and Improved Lives for Dependents (CHILD) Act or Congressman Fleischmann's bill related to modernization of houseparent exemption. I received word from Congressman Fleischmann's office that the bill will be officially dropped as soon as they are back in session. At that time, the bill will be provided a number. The session started today.

- Everyday Philanthropist Act – [H.R. 6616] filed by Rep. Eric Paulsen, would create a federal program called "Flexible Giving Accounts, that would set aside a percentage of one's pre-tax income to donate to charities or nonprofits. In essence, it would allow individuals who choose not to itemize deductions on their income tax to still receive a tax break for their donor dollars.

The bill was introduced in July and has attracted five bipartisan House cosponsors, three Democrats and two Republicans. It is currently assigned to the Ways and Means Committee.

- *Implementation of FFPSA* -From information I've received from CORE members in several states, there have been a number of provider meetings across the nation with state child welfare officials in anticipation of implementation of FFPSA. There are still a lot of unknowns, but the immediacy of the legislation has at least captured attention. The prohibition of IV-E resources being used for payment of residential care for non-treatment related services doesn't take effect until October 1, 2019. States have the option of delaying implementation until October 1, 2021, but in doing so, they will not receive funds for prevention services made available through FFPSA. Reportedly, states need to declare their intent by the first part of November.

I was privileged to accompany the leadership from one children's home to visit with a state-office decision maker in their state. She shared that the Department in their state would continue utilizing residential services for children not needing treatment services. Payments will be made totally from general revenue. Reportedly, the department is pleased with the services and the care children are receiving. Consequently, they have no plans to disrupt placement practices or fail to take advantage of the quality of care being provided.

It hadn't occurred to me that some states may choose to take that approach. Certainly, there is no prohibition in FFPSA for a state to make that determination.

- **Model Standards for Foster Home Licensing**

The Family First Prevention Services Act requires HHS to develop reputable model licensing standards for foster homes. As a step toward doing so, a Federal Register Notice regarding Proposed Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards was published in the Federal Register on August 1, 2018. They are open for review and comment until October 1, 2018.

[ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/01/2018-16380/notice-for-proposed-model-family-foster-home-licensing-standards> ]

### **Welcome to New Members**

The Baptist Children's Village in Mississippi is the newest member of CORE. The children's home has been operational since 1897 and has a legacy of serving children and families from across the State of Mississippi.

Several years ago, the original children's home campus was sold and the agency established living units serving both boys and girls at seven different locations across the State of Mississippi. It was part of a plan to serve children near their families and communities.

Sean Milner, President and CEO of the organization, has been with the agency for a little over two years. He left a successful law practice to yield to a higher calling of giving back to the agency where he grew up. Sean was only five years old when he and his four siblings came to live at Baptist Children's Village. He was there for the next eighteen years. He repeated a couple of grades and was considered a resident while in college.

He credits Baptist Children's Village as the focal point where positive things took place in his life. It also provided him a place of security, nurture, encouragement and safety. It was also an environment of opportunity.

Sean's passion for the work is refreshing. His enthusiasm and ability to relate to kids from hard places puts him ahead of the learning curve. In addition, I got the sense that he will settle for nothing less than a normal childhood for those entrusted to the care of the agency he now leads. He challenges staff to look for ways to say "Yes" to every kind of enrichment opportunity that can come a child's way.