

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

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Chairman Reichert Announces Hearing on Increasing Adoptions from Foster Care

Congressman Dave Reichert (R-WA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on increasing adoptions from foster care, including through the Adoption Incentives program. **The hearing will take place immediately following the Subcommittee organizational meeting that begins at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 27, 2013, in Room 1100 of the Longworth House Office Building.**

In view of the limited time available to hear from witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. Witnesses will include experts from organizations that have had success in increasing adoptions from foster care. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

BACKGROUND:

Congress began providing federal financial support for adoption as part of Public Law 96-272, the *Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980*, with a goal of reducing the number of children in foster care. In 1997, Congress enacted Public Law 105-89, *The Adoption and Safe Families Act*, to further increase the number of children leaving foster care for adoptive homes. This law created the Adoption Incentives program, which provides incentive payments to States that increase the number of adoptions over a base year level. Initially, States were eligible to receive incentive payments either for increases in the number of foster children adopted or for increases in the number of foster children with special needs placed in adoptive homes.

The program was extended by Public Law 108-145, the *Adoption Promotion Act of 2003*, which reset the State baselines and also added a new incentive payment category for adoptions of children age nine and older. This new incentive category was created in response to research showing that once a child reached eight or nine years of age, he or she was more likely to remain in foster care than to be adopted.

Public Law 110-35, the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, again extended the program and reset the State baselines. This 2008 law doubled the incentive payments for

adoptions of special needs children under age 9 and for older child adoptions. The 2008 law also authorized incentive payments for States that increased the *rate* of children adopted from foster care. The Adoption Incentives program is currently authorized through September 30, 2013, as is the Family Connection Grants program which provides grants designed to better connect children in foster care to their relatives.

A number of organizations have developed proven methods for increasing the number of children who are adopted from foster care, contributing to recent success in advancing this goal. For example, some organizations focus on reexamining the adult relationships a foster youth has had during their time in foster care to determine if any of these adults may be possible adoptive parents. Others are building more in-depth relationships with a smaller caseload of foster youth to better understand their needs and desires to find the right home for the child.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Reichert stated, **“While tens of thousands of children are adopted from foster care each year, twice as many foster children are still waiting for a permanent home. Past federal efforts have increased support for adoptions and have helped States reduce the number of children in foster care each year. As we review the Adoption Incentives program in preparation for its reauthorization, we need to make sure these measures are still working well so we can ensure all children have a permanent home as quickly as possible. I look forward to hearing from leaders and experts alike about ways in which we can safely increase the number of children adopted from foster care, so every child has a permanent home and parents to call their own.”**

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The hearing will review successful efforts to increase adoptions of children from foster care. Leaders of several private organizations achieving significant success are expected to testify about their programs, as well as their views on reauthorizing the Adoption Incentives program.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. Attach your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, **by Wednesday, March 13, 2013**. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee

will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons, and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available online at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.