

July 12, 2017

Dear Texas Senators and Representatives:

As Texas organizations and individuals committed to improving outcomes of vulnerable children and families, we respectfully request your support to reauthorize funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, set to expire on September 30, 2017. We applaud the U.S. House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee for introducing legislation that calls for a five-year extension of the program, which currently provides services to over 3,800 Texas families with children 0-5 annually. We look forward to working with the Texas Congressional delegation in a bipartisan fashion to reauthorize MIECHV and hope to see the program grow to reach additional families with young children.

Texas currently receives approximately \$17.2 million annually in MIECHV funding to deliver evidence-based home visiting services within communities where children and families are at greatest need, of which families enroll in services voluntarily. Currently, Texas reaches a mere 10% of the 225,000 families that could benefit from services with Federal (MIECHV), State, Private and Local dollars combined. The MIECHV funding supports the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division's Texas Home Visiting Program, of which the Texas Legislature prioritized and expanded during the recent Texas 85th legislative session.

This bipartisan-supported federal program recognizes parents are children's first teachers, but sometimes even parents need help. In home visiting, nurses, early childhood educators, social workers, and other trained professionals visit families beginning as early as pregnancy through age 5 to empower parents to make healthier decisions for themselves and their children's health, well-being, learning and development. "Evidence-based" refers to home visiting models whose services are proven effective through decades of research demonstrating improvements in maternal and child health, school readiness, and development. Due to these programs proven and positive results, a growing number of legislators have recommended that the benchmark of "evidence-based" should be considered as a top priority for funding consideration.

In Texas, MIECHV funds currently support three evidence-based home visiting models, including Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers, and Nurse-Family Partnership but there are additional evidence-based and evidence-informed programs operating in Texas through other support including Early Head Start (home visiting), Healthy Families America, SafeCare, among others. Texas's continuum of evidence-based home visiting programs are funded through different combinations of public and private funds (federal, private, state, and local) implemented under the PEI Texas Home Visiting Program. In fiscal year 2016, MIECHV funds provided services to 3,817 families across 25 counties out of the 7,766 total families served in the Texas Home Visiting Program. Scientific research demonstrates the significant impact these services have on children and families by improving their health, education, and employment outcomes while reducing criminal justice costs, mental health costs, dependence on welfare and instances of child abuse and neglect - the number one priority this legislative session.

Texas has a long history of investing in evidence-based home visiting programs because they strengthen families and deliver a return on public investment. Today, thousands of Texas children and families are benefitting from evidence-based home visiting programs and we respectfully request your support for a five-year reauthorization of MIECHV.

Sincerely,

Any Baby Can  
AVANCE, Inc.  
Casey Family Services  
Central Texas Table of Grace  
ChildCareGroup  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Coalition of Health Services  
Council for a Strong America  
DeCillis Law PLLC  
Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas  
DePelchin Children's Center  
DFW Foster Parent Association  
Easterseals Rio Grande Valley  
Ellis County Rainbow Room  
Family Compass, Dallas  
First3Years  
Greater Longview United Way  
Healthy Families of Travis County  
Lubbock Area United Way  
Mental Health America of Texas  
MHMRA of Harris County  
Momentous Institute  
Nacogdoches Area United Way  
NAMI Texas  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center on Domestic Violence  
North Texas Area United Way  
Nurse Family Partnership at The Children's Shelter  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
One Voice Texas  
Parents as Teachers, Wichita Falls ISD  
Prevent Child Abuse Texas  
Project Matthew

SAFE Alliance  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Alliance of Child and Family  
Texas Appleseed  
Texas CASA  
Texas Children's Hospital  
Texas Council on Child Welfare Boards  
Texas Foster Family Association  
Texas Head Start Association  
Texas Healthy Start Alliance  
Texas HIPPY, University of North Texas  
Texas Homeless Education Office  
Texas Homeless Network  
Texas Medical Association  
Texas Parent Child Foundation  
Texas Pediatric Society  
TexProtects  
The Children's Shelter  
United Way for Greater Austin  
United Way of Amarillo and Canyon  
United Way of Central Texas  
United Way of Denton County  
United Way of Greater Houston  
United Way of Hays and Caldwell  
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas  
United Way of Midland  
United Way of San Antonio and Bexar  
United Way of South Texas  
United Way of Southern Cameron County  
United Way of the Brazos Valley  
United Way of the Coastal Bend  
United Ways of Texas  
United Women, Lubbock