



October 4, 2023

Dear Members of the Subcommittee on Work and Welfare:

Thank you for your time, interest and thoughtful engagement during the September 28, 2023 *Hearing on Modernizing Child Welfare to Protect Vulnerable Children*. The National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) greatly appreciates Title IV-B's import for children and families – especially Court Improvement Programs nationwide. We look forward to IV-B's enhancement and reauthorization.

During the Subcommittee's hearing, a key theme emerged: nearly every Member and witness agreed that the current federal child welfare financing schema is unnecessarily complicated and bureaucratic. It is difficult for even the most experienced child welfare professionals to navigate this labyrinthine system. As witness Prudence Beidler Carr from the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law testified, "There is no area of law I have ever worked on that is more demanding and complex than child welfare."

If national experts are challenged to understand this set of laws, it is all but impossible for a child, youth or parent to do so on their own. That is why Congress must urgently work to ensure access to legal counsel for children and parents experiencing foster care court proceedings. Our recent report, "[Seen, Heard, and Represented](#)," further explains the nuances of this issue, and how legal counsel improves safety, placement, and kinship results. The Ways and Means Committee could address legal representation through Title IV-E of the Social Act, a child welfare funding stream that also falls under its purview. [Title IV-E dollars fund](#) the critical work of children's and parents legal counsel, making this a logical statutory vehicle for reform.

Backed by a [strong body of research](#) and [broad national support](#), the time is now for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress to guarantee counsel for kids and parents. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to brief you further on this issue. Please let me know if you might be available for a meeting, or if there is further information I can provide. Thank you for your dedication to children, families and the child welfare workforce in your jurisdiction and nationwide.

Sincerely,

Allison Green, JD, CWLS  
Legal Director, National Association of Counsel for Children  
[Allison.Green@NACCchildlaw.org](mailto:Allison.Green@NACCchildlaw.org); 202-230-9128

CC: All Members of House Committee on Ways and Means