



March 24, 2014

The Honorable Robert P. Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Toomey
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Casey and Toomey:

Our daily work is diverse, but we are unified in our commitment to the nurture and protection of Pennsylvania's infants and children and to strengthen the parent-child bond.

As United States Senators, both of you have been committed to protecting Pennsylvania's children. We have welcomed your efforts to assure that people caring for or teaching our children are properly screened; to require that adults speak up when they suspect a child is being abused; and to improve the quality and safety of child care so that parents can have peace of mind as they work.

Today, we would urge that you build upon your proven child protection efforts by ensuring that the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program is reauthorized or extended this year. Sustaining MIECHV will help further shift the pendulum toward prevention in order to reduce the prevalence of child abuse, chronic health conditions, delinquency and other adverse childhood experiences that undermine school and life success.

MIECHV has helped assure that thousands of Pennsylvania children have benefitted from proven programs like Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), Early Head Start (EHS), Healthy Families America (HFA) and Parents as Teachers (PAT). In addition to PA's MIECHV formula and competitive awards, evidence-based home visiting services are also supported by a dedicated state appropriation, local public dollars, as well as private resources.

This combined investment has resulted in more children and families having access to evidence-based services that are intentional and measured in - design and implementation - to improve maternal and child health, break cycles of poverty and produce real economic dividends to our Commonwealth. The MIECHV program exemplifies the type of smart spending that should be part of a national strategy to invest in programs that work and save scarce taxpayer resources.

Recently, emergency room physicians gave Pennsylvania low marks for Public Health and Injury Prevention, in part, because of an infant mortality rate that "is too high." The state's rate is 7.3 deaths per 1,000. Now balance this troubling statistic with this very promising finding: 91% percent of babies born into families served by the NFP program in Pennsylvania were born full term, and 90% were born at a healthy weight, and 95% of children served received all recommended immunizations.

Since 1999, Pennsylvania has recognized that the seeds of health, early learning and life-long success are planted in very early life experiences – positive and negative. Pennsylvania leaders have annually prioritized investment in

Senators Casey and Toomey

RE: MIECHV

Page 2

evidence-based home visiting services that are:

- Voluntary; and
- Focused on the whole family – across generations - to promote:
 - ✚ Improved prenatal health,
 - ✚ Positive maternal and infant birth outcomes,
 - ✚ Family well-being and economic self-sufficiency,
 - ✚ Early childhood health, safety, development and education.

The future of MIECHV and its impact on Pennsylvania's families with young children, however, is now in jeopardy without your leadership and Congressional action.

We urge your leadership and support NOW for the reauthorization or extension of the MIECHV program to ensure that Pennsylvania parents are prepared for and supported in raising children and that every child is nurtured and protected.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics, PA Chapter

Allen Nussbaum, MD, FAAP

Central Susquehanna Valley CAC

Pat Bruno, M.D., FAAP, Medical Director

Children's Advocacy Center of Lawrence County

Sue Ascione, Executive Director

Children's Advocacy Center of NEPA

MaryAnn Laporta, Executive Director

Jennifer Aglialoro, Associate Director

Children's Resource Center of PinnacleHealth

Paula George, MD, Medical Director

Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County

Debby Hennon, Executive Director

Columbia County Family Centers

Allison Williams, Director

Lori Auten, Family Development Specialist

Ashley Mensch, Family Development Specialist

Michelle Welsh, Family Development Specialist

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania

Sallie Lynagh, Children's Team Leader

EOTC/Scranton Area Family Center

Carlene Gula, Program Manager

Erie Family Center

Colleen Masi, Director

Family Service Association of Bucks County

Audrey J Tucker, CEO

HAVIN

Jo Ellen Bowman, MSW, LSW

Healthy Beginnings Plus

Kelly Quinn, Social Worker

Carrie L. Bair MSW LSW, Social Worker

Lancaster County Children's Alliance

Kari Stanley, Executive Director

Lancaster General Hospital

Sottheary Bouarouy

Mary L. Steffy, Nurse Manager

Maternity Care Coalition

Bette Begleiter, Deputy Director

National Nursing Centers Consortium

Katherine Kinsey, Public Health Nurse

Network of Victim Assistance

Barbara Clark, Executive Director

Senators Casey and Toomey

RE: MIECHV

Page 2

Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office

Tara Dechert, Regional Program Developer

Nurse Family Partnership of Lancaster County

Kristen Hollinger, R.N.

Pathways, PA

Brenda Dawson, President/CEO

Penn State Children's Hospital

Mark Dias, MD, FAANS, FAAP

Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics

Benjamin Levi, MD PhD

Director, Center for the Protection of Children

Pennsylvania Chapter of CACs/MDITs

Alison Gray, Director

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Peg Dierkers, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

Delilah Rumburg, CEO

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director of Public Advocacy

PA Court Appointed Special Advocates

Dennis Hockensmith, Executive Director

Pennsylvania EMS for Children Project

Thomas Winkler, Project Director

Pennsylvania Head Start Association

Blair Hyatt, Executive Director

PA Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Program

Kelly Cappos, Nurse Coordinator

Philadelphia Children's Alliance

Chris Kirchner, Executive Director

Prevent Child Abuse PA

Teresa Olsen, Acting Director

Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center

Jenny Murphy-Shifflet, President/CEO

Sto-Rox Family Center

Edie Khoury, Director

Support Center for Child Advocates

Frank Cervone, Executive Director

The Center for Children's Justice

Cathleen Palm, Founder

The Guidance Center

Luann McMackin, Program Director

United Way of the Capital Region

Timothy F. Whelan, Vice President

Victims Resource Center

Janet MacKay, Executive Director

Victim Services Inc. (Cambria/Somerset)

Wanda D. Vavrek, Executive Director

Women Organized Against Rape

Carole Johnson, Executive Director

YWCA Greater Harrisburg

Tina L Nixon, CEO

INDIVIDUALS

Mary Achilles (Cumberland County)

Mikele Bay (McKean County)

Rachel Berger MD (Allegheny County)

Jeannette Castro (Lebanon County)

Allan R. De Jong, M.D. (Chester County)

Joe DeVizia (Luzerne County)

Rev. Karl Jones (Schuylkill County)

Ruth Kolb (Allegheny County)

Carol Lavery (Luzerne County)

Abbie Newman (Montgomery County)

Sandra Pepler (Lancaster County)

Janet F. Rosenzweig MS, PhD, MPA (Bucks County)

Sheldon Schwartz (Franklin County)

Connie Sentz (Lehigh County)

Gary Shuey (Cumberland County)

Shirley Smith (Jefferson County)

Letty Thall (Philadelphia County)

Jennifer Walker (Lancaster County)

Edith L. Weddington-Cruz (Lebanon County)

Patricia Yoder (Lancaster County)