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Dr. Wade Horn
Asst. Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

**VIA FAX
AND FCM**

RE: Interim Final Regulation Implementing Next Phase of Welfare Reform

Dear Dr. Horn,

I applaud the recently announced changes resulting from the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 in the office's Interim Final Regulation Implementing Next Phase of Welfare Reform. In particular, strengthening State accountability is a step in the right direction as well as the clarifying work participation requirements for recipients of IV-A services. As you may be already aware there are numerous legislative attempts in Congress to repeal specific portions of the DRA of 2005 and also attempts to undo the State and Federal government from recovering expenditures made through IV-A.

It is imperative that similar work requirements, means testing, and eligibility restrictions be placed on Title IV-D services as are seen in Title IV-A as a precursor for individuals to receive benefits through State IV-D programs. Without similar eligibility restrictions, there is significant risk of undoing your progress that began with the National Fatherhood Initiative and Healthy Marriage projects, in addition to rising expenses to the U.S. tax payers.

Currently States are using the unrestricted Title IV-D services to **generate revenue** for growing State bureaucracies by padding the Title IV-D rolls. This revenue generation and increased participation numbers have taken the focus off providing an **adequate safety-net for needy families** and have placed an emphasis for the States to establish an absent parent despite instances of both parents being fit, willing, and able to care for their children. There is incentive being placed for courts to maintain that it is in the best interests of a child to have substantially limited contact with one of their parents to fit litigants into the Title IV-D model of custodial and non-custodial instead of two custodial parents. This is an unacceptable outcome of the program which is clearly demonstrated by the dramatic rise in forced participation numbers and sizable growth of State IV-D programs.

Legislatively, eligibility requirements should be uniform between Title IV-A and Title IV-D so there is no longer a rush for State IV-D programs to force individuals to

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participate in their IV-D programs unless they meet requirements and voluntarily request services. In addition to similar eligibility restrictions between IV-A and IV-D there should be a requirement of states to have a presumption of substantially similar parental rights and access to their children except in cases of Domestic Violence or clear and convincing evidentiary standards of immediate harm to children. These legislative changes would allow the Title IV-D agencies to focus on providing the necessary safety-net for identified needy families and relieving the burden of over participation that has been caused from the rush of States to increase their revenue from the program. A streamlined agency with focused defined goals would arise from these changes, saving tax-payers billions and strengthening the safety-net for needy families.

Administratively, each state should be denied any additional waivers for pass-thru child-support in addition to their Title IV-A welfare benefits. The Wisconsin demonstration project for passing-thru child support dramatically increases the expense to the federal government and U.S. taxpayers who now would be paying the States for both Title IV-A and Title IV-D without ever seeing any reimbursement. The States say the pass-thru is so successful because it allows the State to not have to pay back any money to the Federal Government, despite Title IV-D's intention to do exactly that. The purpose and intention of Title IV-D has been to recover expenditures made by State and Federal governments funding of Title IV-A block grants, not as an alternative income source and reward for having a broken home. To allow pass-thru waivers only adds additional incentive to drive up State participation numbers and encourage broken homes, thereby limiting a child's relationship with one of their parents in order to maintain the current Title IV-D model and despite both parents being fit, willing, and able to raise their children.

Reigning in the Title IV-D program is good for our tax-payers, good for our parents, and most of all... good for our children. I look forward to discussing this matter further with you.

Very Truly Yours,



Lary Holland

Cc: Secretary Henry Paulson *via fax*,
Asst. Secretary Mark Warshawsky *via fax*,
File.