November 1, 2017

Honorable Chairman Roy Blunt
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

Honorable Ranking Member Patty Murray
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to thank you and other members of the Subcommittee for including strong language regarding children exposed to trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the Report to Accompany S. 1771, the Fiscal Year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The report language encourages agencies funded by the bill to enhance coordination on activities that address childhood trauma, including data collection and awarding grants. The report also asks agencies to examine current practices and to solicit public feedback to help identify and then disseminate best practices for the identification, referral, and implementation of trauma-informed interventions. The Committee further encourages the Departments and agencies to promote programs that incorporate trauma-informed best practices, including two generational interventions, integration or co-location of mental health services, or training front-line service providers in understanding trauma and implementing appropriate responses. Finally, we are supportive of the subcommittee’s efforts to consider expanding the Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) program to increase opportunities for collaboration across agencies to provide effective interventions to children exposed to trauma and ACEs and are pleased the GAO will be working to identify such opportunities.

Your subcommittee’s commitment to addressing ACEs and childhood trauma is critical to helping ensure that all children can grow up healthy and able to fully contribute to society. Nearly half of all children in the United States (approximately 35 million) have experienced one or more types of childhood trauma and nearly a quarter have experienced two or more. These ACEs range from abuse or neglect to stressful experiences connected to living in poverty or violent neighborhoods, including lack of nutritious food, housing insecurity, or witnessing violence.

Exposure to ACEs and trauma, without effective interventions, has lifetime consequences. Children who experience ACEs have lower educational attainment and significantly higher rates of chronic disease, obesity, mental illness, and drug abuse. In addition to the terrible human cost of childhood trauma, there is a large fiscal impact. The Centers for Disease Control estimate that just one year of confirmed child maltreatment
costs our nation $124 billion over the lifetime of those children, including increased health care, criminal justice, and special education costs.

Fortunately, interventions can mitigate and prevent the impacts of ACEs and trauma and improve health and well-being outcomes for children. Many of the agencies and attendant programs funded by the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill hold tremendous potential to increase the use of trauma-informed interventions that can help individuals stem the impact of ACEs.

Once again, thank you for taking this important step to put the scientific discoveries about trauma to work in our Federally-funded programs.

Sincerely,

National Organizations
The Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice
The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
The Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness
United Way Worldwide
The Roundtable on Native American Trauma-Informed Initiatives
Futures Without Violence
Coalition for Community Schools
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Association of Counties (NACo)
American Psychological Association
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy (NARPA)
Peace Alliance
Children’s National Health System
The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
American Art Therapy Association,
National Association of Social Workers
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
Jewish Federations of North America
EMDR International Association
Mental Health American
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA
Family Focused Treatment Association

State and Local Organizations
Partners for Our Children, University of Washington School of Social Work
Resilience Builders, LLC, Lee's Summit, Mo.
Ozark Center, Mo.
Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, West Va.
Alive and Well Communities, St. Louis Regional Health Commission
The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City
Partners for Our Children, University of Washington School of Social Work
Places for People, Inc. Seattle
Treatment Innovations
Health Federation of Philadelphia
Alaska Children’s Trust
Georgia Advocacy Office
The William Kellibrew Foundation
Trillium Family Services (Oregon)
City of Dallas, TX
Peace4Tarpon
Peace4Gainesville
River Center for Peacebuilding