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April 18, 2019

The Honorable Marco Rubio
U.S. Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Rubio and Feinstein:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I am writing to share our opposition to the *State Flexibility for Family First Transitions Act of 2019 (S. 107)*.

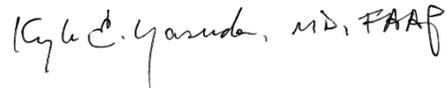
The AAP has significant concerns about this bill because it would undermine the implementation of the AAP-championed *Family First Prevention Services Act* (Family First). Family First is a bipartisan, landmark child welfare reform law that will create critical policy change to better serve vulnerable children and families in two ways: 1) preventing unnecessary foster care placements by enabling states to use federal funds previously limited to paying for foster care to provide families in crisis services they need to remain safely together; and 2) creating new federal requirements to ensure that children who do need foster care are with a family unless their needs require specialized care beyond that available in a family setting.

S. 107 would extend for two years a child welfare waiver demonstration program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. Congress designed Title IV-E waivers, which expire on September 30, 2019, to support individual state child welfare policy innovations, including those that informed the development of Family First. Family First did not alter these waivers, but its enactment represents an intentional shift forward from individual demonstration projects to a universal policy that will fundamentally improve the child welfare system for all children, regardless of where they live. S. 107 would undermine the success of Family First by continuing costly waivers that benefit a limited number of states at the expense of enacting a comprehensive policy to provide all states needed resources and supports to make Family First succeed.

Pediatricians are committed to ensuring the effective implementation of Family First to create this needed change across the country. Extending the Title IV-E waivers will undermine the success of Family First and reduce the law's ability to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families. The AAP looks forward to working with policymakers to develop equitable policies that support all states in successfully implementing Family First.

If the AAP can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Zach Laris in our Washington, D.C. office at 202/347-8600 or zlaris@aap.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle C. Yasuda, MD, FAAP". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kyle Yasuda, MD, FAAP
President
KEY/zml