



December 2, 2016

The Honorable Harry Reid
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Mr. Speaker, and Madame Minority Leader,

On behalf of the more than 800 member organizations of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS), we urge you to not include the *Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016* in any end-of-the-year legislation because there has not been full debate and discussion on this legislation. This is a critical issue for our country and young people, and this should not be added at the last minute to end-of-the-year legislation.

Moreover, this legislation was just dropped out of the *21st Century Cures* bill because both House and Senate members objected to this bill being added at the last minute without full debate and discussion.

We have serious concerns about the *Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016*, which we believe will lead to reduced access to critical residential treatment, increase healthcare costs, create unnecessary administrative burden, and decrease state flexibility – without adequately addressing the real needs of foster children.

Our members are truly committed to at-risk children and keeping these children with their families, but this legislation, because it would lead to reduced access to residential treatment, when no other option is appropriate or medically necessary, is not in the best interest of children in the foster care system. Reforming the child welfare system should be an important priority for Congress next year, but it should follow regular order, so all stakeholders and members of Congress are fully able to participate in this very important debate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Covall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Covall" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Covall
President and CEO