



Senator Jeff Bingaman
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3102

March 7, 2008

Dear Senator Bingaman:

As Director of the KIDS COUNT program at New Mexico Voices for Children (NMVC), I am writing to ask for your support on S.1484, the State Child Well-Being Research Act. As you may know, NMVC works to improve the health and well-being of our state's children and families. We believe in evidence-based advocacy, which is why our KIDS COUNT program tracks trends in child well-being. This kind of research gives policymakers, educators, the public, and the business community an accurate picture of the conditions of New Mexico's children, thus enabling them to make informed decisions. The State Child Well-Being Research Act will provide funding for timely and detailed state-level data about children in many issue areas, including education, health, safety, and social and emotional development.

More specifically, this legislation will provide states with data for children in various sub-groups like age ranges, income, and demographic groups. The data will also be collected nationally so it can be compared across states. In a state like New Mexico, with a fairly small population, it is important to have detailed data so that the effectiveness of public programs serving children and families can be assessed accurately. Moreover, it will be easier to evaluate New Mexico's programs by looking at programs in other states with similar demographics.

With states shouldering more responsibility for the administration of programs serving children, policymakers and child advocates need the best available data to ensure that funding is being utilized efficiently to produce the best outcomes. By co-sponsoring this bill, you will bring this important resource closer to fruition. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lisa Adams-Shafer
KIDS COUNT Program Director