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June 22, 2009

Representative Roscoe Bartlett
United States House of Representatives
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-2193

Dear Representative Bartlett:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced H.R.2558, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 2558.** Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced companion legislation in the Senate, S.1151. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

As you know, over the past decade the federal government has given the states far greater power to administer programs for children and families. In order to make informed decisions about where our limited resources should be invested, we need accurate, timely and reliable data about Maryland's children and whether the current programs are providing them with the assistance they need. Moreover, the U.S. government needs this information in order to assure that our scarce federal dollars are spent effectively.

Unfortunately, for the most part, that data does not currently exist. Child Trends, the nation's only national research and policy center that conducts research and analyses data focused *exclusively* on improving outcomes for children, has conducted a study of the available state level data on child well-being. Their analysis shows that national surveys do not have adequate sample sizes to provide statistically significant data, particularly for small- or medium-sized states. While some state level surveys do exist, the data they provide is very patchy, with large gaps. Program administration data for programs such as Medicaid, SCHIP, TANF or child care provides information only on children in the programs, not on all children.

The State Child Well-Being Research Act would expand the National Survey of Child Health and allow the collection and dissemination of important data in each and every state, rather than just the dozen or so feasible in the current SIPP program. Data would be collected on a rolling basis, so that key data would be available every year and subgroup data every two years. Data would be available to local, state, and federal policy-makers four to six months after collection. In Maryland, this data would



be based on the experiences of about 1,800 families. We estimate that this study would cost \$20 million a year.

Furthermore, if Congress adopts the state-level data approach that we are supporting, it will be made even more useful because of a public/private partnership that has been proposed. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and other foundations have offered to invest at least \$1 million a year in order to train and provide technical assistance to state officials and policy analysts, thus ensuring that the data will be understandable, accessible and will become an excellent tool to increase child well-being in our state.

The information collected would guide our decisions not just on programs for low-income residents, but also on a wide range of other programs serving Maryland's children and families. While the Maternal and Child Health agency experts would determine the actual questions included in the survey in consultation with other federal agency staff and outside advisors, some information that could be gathered includes:

- Children's health data, to help guide decisions on how to best invest in improving children's health outcomes;
- Identification of children who are eligible for public health insurance but are not covered in order to increase enrollment rates in SCHIP;
- Data on children's contact with non-custodial parents, which can be used to improve fatherhood programs;
- Family structure and child well-being data (which can be used to assess the effectiveness of marriage promotion efforts funded through TANF);
- Data on parental perceptions of child-care quality, accessibility, and affordability;
- Data on the amount of time children generally spend in child care, in order to guide decisions on hourly work requirements for families moving from welfare to work.

The growing federal debt and nationwide state funding shortfalls make it essential that policy-makers have access to timely, high quality data to help ensure that every dollar spent goes to effective programs that provide real support to our most vulnerable populations.

Congressmen Fattah and Camp's bill would help hard-pressed state policy-makers and administrations across the nation. A state-level cross-sectional survey would ensure samples sizes of about 1,800 households with children in each and every state, providing states with an invaluable resource to everyone concerned about the well-being of children and families.

We are hopeful you will support the State Child Well-Being Research Act. We look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Matthew Joseph
Executive Director

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June 22, 2009

Senator Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510
By Fax (202) 224-1651

Dear Senator Cardin:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced S. 1151, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to co-sponsor S. 1151.** Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced companion legislation in the House, H.R. 2558. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

As you know, over the past decade the federal government has given the states far greater power to administer programs for children and families. In order to make informed decisions about where our limited resources should be invested, we need accurate, timely and reliable data about Maryland's children and whether the current programs are providing them with the assistance they need. Moreover, the U.S. government needs this information in order to assure that our scarce federal dollars are spent effectively.

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Senator Rockefeller and Senator Snowe's bill would help hard-pressed state policy-makers and administrations across the nation. A state-level cross-sectional survey would ensure samples sizes of about 1,800 households with children in each and every state, providing states with an invaluable resource to everyone concerned about the well-being of children and families.

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June 22, 2009

Representative Elijah Cummings
United States House of Representatives
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-3178

Dear Representative Cummings:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced H.R.2558, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to again co-sponsor H.R. 2558, as you did in the 110th Congress.** Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced companion legislation in the Senate, S.1151. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

As you know, over the past decade the federal government has given the states far greater power to administer programs for children and families. In order to make informed decisions about where our limited resources should be invested, we need accurate, timely and reliable data about Maryland's children and whether the current programs are providing them with the assistance they need. Moreover, the U.S. government needs this information in order to assure that our scarce federal dollars are spent effectively.

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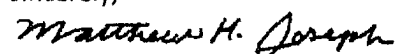
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Matthew Joseph
Executive Director

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June 22, 2009

Representative Donna Edwards
United States House of Representatives
318 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-8714

Dear Representative Edwards:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced H.R.2558, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 2558.** Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced companion legislation in the Senate, S.1151. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

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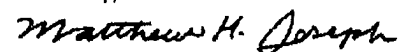
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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Matthew Joseph
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June 22, 2009

Majority Leader Hoyer
United States House of Representatives
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-4300

Dear Majority Leader Hoyer:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

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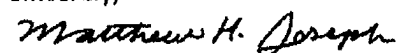
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June 22, 2009

Representative Frank Kratovil, Jr.
United States House of Representatives
314 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-0254

Dear Representative Kratovil:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

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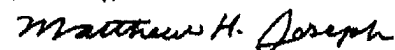
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June 18, 2009

Senator Barbara Mikulski
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510
By Fax (202) 224-8858

Dear Senator Mikulski:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced S. 1151, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to co-sponsor S. 1151.** Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced companion legislation in the House, H.R. 2558. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

As you know, over the past decade the federal government has given the states far greater power to administer programs for children and families. In order to make informed decisions about where our limited resources should be invested, we need accurate, timely and reliable data about Maryland's children and whether the current programs are providing them with the assistance they need. Moreover, the U.S. government needs this information in order to assure that our scarce federal dollars are spent effectively.

Unfortunately, for the most part, that data does not currently exist. Child Trends, the nation's only national research and policy center that conducts research and analyses data focused *exclusively* on improving outcomes for children, has conducted a study of the available state level data on child well-being. Their analysis shows that national surveys do not have adequate sample sizes to provide statistically significant data, particularly for small- or medium-sized states. While some state level surveys do exist, the data they provide is very patchy, with large gaps. Program administration data for programs such as Medicaid, SCHIP, TANF or child care provides information only on children in the programs, not on all children.

The State Child Well-Being Research Act would expand the National Survey of Child Health and allow the collection and dissemination of important data in each and every state, rather than just the dozen or so feasible in the current SIPP program. Data would be collected on a rolling basis, so that key data would be available every year and subgroup data every two years. Data would be available to local, state, and federal policy-makers four to six months after collection. In Maryland, this data would



be based on the experiences of about 1,800 families. We estimate that this study would cost \$20 million a year.

Furthermore, if Congress adopts the state-level data approach that we are supporting, it will be made even more useful because of a public/private partnership that has been proposed. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and other foundations have offered to invest at least \$1 million a year in order to train and provide technical assistance to state officials and policy analysts, thus ensuring that the data will be understandable, accessible and will become an excellent tool to increase child well-being in our state.

The information collected would guide our decisions not just on programs for low-income residents, but also on a wide range of other programs serving Maryland's children and families. While the Maternal and Child Health agency experts would determine the actual questions included in the survey in consultation with other federal agency staff and outside advisors, some information that could be gathered includes:

- Children's health data, to help guide decisions on how to best invest in improving children's health outcomes;
- Identification of children who are eligible for public health insurance but are not covered in order to increase enrollment rates in SCHIP;
- Data on children's contact with non-custodial parents, which can be used to improve fatherhood programs;
- Family structure and child well-being data (which can be used to assess the effectiveness of marriage promotion efforts funded through TANF);
- Data on parental perceptions of child-care quality, accessibility, and affordability;
- Data on the amount of time children generally spend in child care, in order to guide decisions on hourly work requirements for families moving from welfare to work.

The growing federal debt and nationwide state funding shortfalls make it essential that policy-makers have access to timely, high quality data to help ensure that every dollar spent goes to effective programs that provide real support to our most vulnerable populations.

Senator Rockefeller and Senator Snowe's bill would help hard-pressed state policy-makers and administrations across the nation. A state-level cross-sectional survey would ensure samples sizes of about 1,800 households with children in each and every state, providing states with an invaluable resource to everyone concerned about the well-being of children and families.

We are hopeful you will support the State Child Well-Being Research Act. We look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Matthew Joseph
Executive Director

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June 18, 2009

Representative Dutch Ruppersberger
United States House of Representatives
2453 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-3094

Dear Representative Ruppersberger:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

Representatives Chaka Fattah and Dave Camp have introduced H.R.2558, The State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009, which would expand the National Survey of Child Health. **I urge you to again cosponsor H.R. 2558, as you did in the 110th Congress.** Senators Jay Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe have introduced companion legislation in the Senate, S.1151. We are hopeful that you can lend your voice to this important issue.

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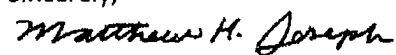
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Congressmen Fattah and Camp's bill would help hard-pressed state policy-makers and administrations across the nation. A state-level cross-sectional survey would ensure samples sizes of about 1,800 households with children in each and every state, providing states with an invaluable resource to everyone concerned about the well-being of children and families.

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June 18, 2009

Representative John Sarbanes
United States House of Representatives
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-9219

Dear Representative Sarbanes:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

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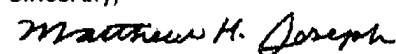
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June 22, 2009

Representative Chris Van Hollen
United States House of Representatives
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
By Fax (202) 225-0375

Dear Representative Van Hollen:

As executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth, an organization dedicated to providing a strong, powerful voice for children, youth and families in Maryland, I am writing to ask for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve access to critical information about the condition of Maryland's children. Obtaining this information would allow policy-makers to more effectively analyze how programs are working on the ground and what steps are needed to improve quality of life for children in our state.

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