



*****PRESS RELEASE*****

MAY 10 LAUNCH SET FOR NEW INITIATIVE – KEEPING THE PROMISE – TO RESHAPE ADOPTION IN U.S.
MAJOR CHILD WELFARE GROUPS UNITE IN CALL FOR SERVICES TO HELP FAMILIES SUCCEED

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A broad coalition of adoption and child welfare organizations – including the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, the Congressional Coalition for Adoption Institute, Voice for Adoption, the Child Welfare League of America, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and the Center for Adoption Support and Education – co-sponsored a Congressional briefing as part of a landmark national initiative designed to “reshape” adoption in the U.S. – particularly for children from foster care.

Families who have struggled because they lacked sufficient services – as well as families who have surmounted their challenges because they received needed supports – told their stories and answered questions at the event. Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, a member of the Congressional Coalition for Adoption, spoke about how federal policy can address this need.

Highlighted at the briefing was the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute’s report “Keeping the Promise: The Critical Need for Post-Adoption Services to Enable Children and Families to Succeed,” which is the most comprehensive compilation to date of knowledge about post-adoption needs and services. It concludes that too many are not receiving the essential assistance they need, calls for a reshaping of national priorities and resources to develop and provide such services – and provides a series of recommendations for improving policy and practice.

As the report stresses, the vast majority of adopted children function normally, and their parents are highly satisfied with their families. But over the past 15 years, nearly a million boys and girls were adopted by Americans from foster care in our country and from orphanages abroad, and the majority of U.S. adoptions continue to be of those types (by far, mostly from state child welfare systems).

“What it means is that these children live with the emotional, psychological and developmental consequences of having been abused, neglected or institutionalized *before* they were adopted,” said Adoption Institute Executive Director Adam Pertman. “The good news is that most of them, and their families, are doing just fine; the bad news is that the ones who need help too often aren’t getting it.”

Having access to high quality post services provided by an adoption competent professional can be make a major difference in the lives of an adopted child and their family. Millard and Athene Boetler learned this lesson after adopting their daughter at age two from the Philippines. “When we first sought help, we were told by a professional that our best option was to place our daughter (then age 5) in a psychiatric hospital”, said Millard Boetler, After receiving therapy and training designed specifically for children who are adopted they saw a difference, “Our experience shows that there should be specialized training for doctors, therapists, educators and health care providers in adoption related behavior.”



Stories like the Boetler's have caught the attention of federal policymakers, Senator Amy Klobuchar, who opened Tuesday's briefing and has introduced federal legislation on the need for post adoption services said, "I have worked with families in Minnesota and across our nation to cut red tape and help streamline the adoption process. One of the biggest challenges facing adoptive families is that there are simply not enough support services available to help them sustain healthy and successful adoptions. I will continue to work to make sure both parents and children have the care they need to build strong and stable families."

"The paradigm has to shift from simply placing children in families for adoption to providing the supports that families need to raise children to healthy adulthood" said Nicole Dobbins, Executive Director of Voice for Adoption, "As a coalition of partners; we are hoping to lead the nation in this direction". Among the coalition's recommendations are to:

- Convene a national leadership task force to shape/ promote changes in policy and practice.
- Develop public-private partnerships and dedicated federal funding for post-adoption services.
- Make such services a routine part of federal, state and local child welfare planning/financing.
- Fund and conduct critically needed research to develop and assess the most effective services.

For more information about the partners in this unprecedented effort to help children and families in our country by transforming adoption practices, please go to the organizations' website, including:

- Congressional Coalition for Adoption Institute: www.ccainstitute.org
- Voice for Adoption: www.voice-for-adoption.org
- North American Council on Adoptable Children: www.nacac.org
- Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org.
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption: www.davethomasfoundation.org.
- Center for Adoption Support and Education: www.adoptionsupport.org.

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