

CWLA CALLS ON CONGRESS TO REJECT OUT OF BALANCE BUDGET BY PRESIDENT

Washington, DC - The Child Welfare League of America called on the new Congress to reject out of hand the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2008. The President released his budget for FY 2008 which claims to balance federal spending by 2012.

Shay Bilchik, President and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America stated that "This budget is anything but balanced in how it serves the American people. With cuts to children's health, and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and a continuing call for a foster care block grant this budget is out of balance with America's priorities. This includes the elimination of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a grievous error in judgment which will jeopardize the gains we have made in reducing youth crime. With a budget that includes nearly three-quarters of a trillion in spending for the Defense Department and the war, this budget spends more in this one area than the 1982 budget spent on the entire federal government including the cold war and Social Security."

The President's proposal would once again propose a block grant of foster care funding and as part of the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. (S-CHIP) would under fund what it will cost to maintain the current health insurance coverage of children. The budget cuts \$500 million for SSBG taking it from \$1.7 billion to \$1.2 billion. SSBG funds a range of children's and aging programs. Programs such as child care and Head Start are either frozen or reduced and the President is also proposing to eliminate dedicated juvenile justice programs and convert this funding into a new flexible grant program.

"The priorities are clear in FY 2008 and it is not our children. We call on Congress to reject this out of hand because we should not trade off children for greater and bigger tax cuts and more spending for the war." said Bilchik.

Since 1920, The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) has been the nation's pre-eminent membership-based organization dedicated to ensuring that disadvantaged and vulnerable children are protected from harm and have the tools and resources they need to grow into the healthy and happy adults we want them to become. CWLA is the trusted authority for professionals who work with children and the only national organization with 900 public and private member agencies working across all sectors of the children's services field.

#