

For Immediate Release

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Washington, DC - The Child Welfare League of America expressed outrage today that the House Ways and Means Committee budget reconciliation proposal will limit supports for abused and neglected children as a way to reduce overall federal spending. The Committee is specifically undermining the ability of grandparents and other family members to care for children who need their support.

“Studies show that when asked, Americans want to do more to support abused and neglected children and do not want them to be deprived of the care and love of family members who can keep them safe. This proposal highlights a wrong priority and the wrong choice on the part of Congress,” said Shay Bilchik, President and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America.

The draft FY 2006 budget reconciliation bill released today by the House Ways and Means Committee would reduce federal spending by making two changes that affect children who have been removed from their families due to neglect or abuse. The bill overturns an important court ruling (*Rosales v. Thompson*) issued by the Ninth Circuit Court in 2003 that resulted in more children becoming eligible for federal foster care assistance, particularly children who are living with grandparents or other relatives. The bill would also enact into law an administrative attempt to limit support to families caring

for their relative's children by imposing strict licensing requirements in a shortened timeframe.

If this legislation is adopted it will demonstrate priorities that are not allied with what the majority of Americans want for our most vulnerable children. The choice to reduce supports for children in need of help is not a good one for these children or for our country.

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.