



ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TRIBAL HOME VISITING INITIATIVES

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September 15, 2022

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Danny K. Davis
Chairman
Worker and Family Support Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
Acting Ranking Member
Worker and Family Support Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady, Chairman Davis and Acting Ranking Member Wenstrup,

I am writing to express the appreciation of state and Tribal recipients of Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting funds for the introduction of the *Jackie Walorski Maternal and Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act* and your strong, bipartisan commitment to home visiting. This bill is a moving, fitting tribute to the late Ranking Member, whose support for home visiting was widely known and deeply appreciated well beyond her home state. We are delighted to see this part of the reauthorization process move forward under your leadership, with legislation that responds to the communicated needs of the field and the communities that home visiting serves. We hope that Congress can complete the five year, bipartisan reauthorization as quickly as possible to minimize service interruption, staff losses and disruption of local programs. This legislation is meaningful step forward in achieving that goal.

The Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan collaboration of state and Tribal administrators of home visiting programs. As you know, the MIECHV funding our members administer has been held constant (if you do not account for sequestration cuts or inflation) at \$400 million since 2013. We are grateful that the Committee has heard, and responded to, the need for resources to retain experienced home visitors, respond to the findings of the most recent community needs assessments, and sustain the high quality, relationship-based services that drive meaningful outcomes for children and families. Additional provisions in the legislation that have earned the appreciation of state and Tribal administrators include:

- The five year reauthorization, which allows states and local programs the stability and predictability needed to plan for and implement home visiting service continuity.

- The doubling of the Tribal set-aside. This will enable additional federally recognized Tribes and urban Indian-serving organizations to support Native American families and communities with home visiting.
- The explicit continuation of authority to conduct virtual home visits with model fidelity in response to the needs of home visitors or families.
- The establishment of a fixed, known level for maintenance of effort to facilitate planning and budgeting.
- Retention of MIECHV's focus on targeted, intensive home visiting that provides both direct services and referrals to participating families.
- Provisions to address and reduce the substantial paperwork burden and administrative cost associated with MIECHV at the local, Tribal and state level.

Finally, ASTHVI members appreciate the Committee's decision to provide base grant awards, without a match, to all MIECHV state recipients, and to exempt Tribal awardees from the match requirement. The inclusion of a funding formula with five years of visibility into future grant amounts will allow governors, state legislators, and MIECHV administering agencies to better plan and manage home visiting funds. However, many of our members are concerned about states' ability to make the match, particularly in future years as state economies and budgets fluctuate. In particular, ASTHVI members who represent rural states are concerned that the FY 2023 base grants in many cases represent a reduction from pandemic-year funding levels. We have heard from administrators whose ability to serve additional families in rural and frontier areas will be constrained under the funding allocation, including the match requirement, outlined in the bill. We look forward to working with you as the legislation moves forward to address the concerns of our rural members.

The *Jackie Walorski Maternal and Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act* is a testament to the Congresswoman for whom it is named, and to your bipartisan leadership in developing strong policy and funding to sustain MIECHV into the future. We look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead to complete a five year reauthorization in her honor.

Sincerely,

Catriona Macdonald

Executive Director