

Weekly Report – May 4

Voice for Adoption (VFA) provides weekly e-mail updates to its members on adoption and child welfare news, resources, and legislation, as well as updates on VFA's activities. Below is the update for the week of April 30 – May 4, 2007.

New Reports

- A new report from First Star entitled, “A Child’s Right to Counsel: First Star’s National Report Card on Legal Representation for Children,” finds that nearly half of U.S. states fail to provide legal representation for abused and neglected foster children, leaving them without a voice during judicial proceedings that profoundly impact their futures. The press release about the report is available online at: www.firststar.org/news/reportcardpressrelease.asp. The report can be downloaded at: www.firststar.org/research/documents/FIRSTSTARReportCard07.pdf

Policy Update

- Generations United and Kids Are Waiting, in collaboration with Congressman Danny K. Davis and Congressman Tim Johnson, are holding a briefing entitled, “Children Being Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: How Are They Faring?” The briefing will be held on Friday, May 11, 2007, from 9 – 10 a.m. at the Cannon House Office Building, Room 121. More information on the briefing is available online at: www.gu.org/Brief4271579.asp
- The Children’s Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has updated the Child Welfare Policy Manual with new questions and answers about the new requirements for interstate homestudies enacted as part of the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006. The new information is available online at: www.acf.hhs.gov/j2ee/programs/cb/laws_policies/laws/cwpm/policy_dsp.jsp?citID=90#1662
- North Carolina’s governor, Mike Easley, has proposed a state adoption tax credit. More information is available in this article: www.newsobserver.com/102/story/566526.html
- Iowa has a new law that gives children in foster care visitation rights with their siblings. More information is available in this article: desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070416/NEWS/70416018/1001
- Reminder: the Children’s Defense Fund campaign for children’s health insurance is encouraging people to contact their members of Congress in support of health and mental health insurance coverage for all children. For information on calling your members of Congress, go to: childrensdefense.org/MothersDayCall
For information on e-mailing your member of Congress, go to: childrensdefense.org/MothersDayEmail

Other News and Resources

- The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption has released its list of the 100 best adoption-friendly workplaces. Rankings are based on employer-provided adoption benefits, such as the amount of financial assistance and paid leave for employees who adopt. Companies were invited to make the list by completing a direct mail or online adoption benefits

survey. The list is available online at:

www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org/afw/afw_index.asp

- The Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released a funding opportunity entitled "Using Comprehensive Family Assessments to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes." The application deadline is June 25, 2007. Details on the funding opportunity are available online at: www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2007-ACF-ACYF-CA-0023.html
- The Urban Institute has released testimony it provided to the Senate's Committee on Finance about the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The abstract of the testimony states, "The research evidence strongly indicates that SCHIP has been a success, leading to improvements in insurance coverage and access to care among low-income children, without crowding out employer coverage on a large scale. The research also clearly indicates that reductions in program funding or eligibility, either to children or their parents, would have adverse effects on the health and well-being of children." The full testimony is available online at: www.urban.org/publications/901067.html
- The National Center for Children in Poverty has released a factsheet that discusses how the U.S. government measures poverty, why the current measure is inadequate, and what alternative ways exist to measure economic hardship. The factsheet is available online at: nccp.org/pub_mip07.html