

THE DONALDSON ADOPTION INSTITUTE

**Statement of the Donaldson Adoption Institute
Senate Finance Committee Hearing
[“A Way Back Home: Preserving Families and Reducing the Need for Foster Care”](#)
August 4, 2015**

The [Donaldson Adoption Institute](#) (DAI) respectfully submits this statement regarding the Senate Finance Committee’s August 4, 2015 hearing, “A Way Back Home: Preserving Families and Reducing the Need for Foster Care.”

DAI appreciates the Committee’s continuing efforts to ensure the safety, permanency and wellbeing of America’s children and youth. Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Committee members and staff are to be commended for convening a bipartisan hearing to understand parent and youth experiences and needs, as well as to share promising practices that provide families the tools they need to succeed.

Since 1996, DAI has worked to improve the lives of children and families across our country and around the world through research, education and advocacy that has led to better laws, policies, practices and perceptions. To achieve our goals, we investigate the issues of greatest concern to first/birth families, adopted persons, adoptive/foster families, the people who love them and the professionals who serve them. We then determine best practices and offer policy recommendations working with a broad array of partners in educational efforts and advocacy campaigns.

DAI supports the Family Stability & Kinship Care Act’s (S1964) cost-effective investments in key child welfare objectives -- enhancing family safety and stability, enabling kinship placements, and promoting children’s wellbeing, while preventing unnecessary foster care placements and decreasing foster care lengths of stay. We are grateful to Sen. Wyden for seeking input on his May discussion draft, carefully tailoring the current legislation, and incorporating recommendations from DAI and other child welfare organizations into S1964.

In general, DAI welcomes the bill’s Title IVE funding for family preservation services as a safe alternative to foster care, focus on promising and evidence-based programs, and attention to outcomes, in addition to the Title IVB increased, mandatory Promoting Safe and Stable Families investment in community-based services to support parents and children. In particular, DAI applauds the bill’s specific inclusion of adoptive/guardian family eligibility for Title IVE interventions, and minimum Title IVB spending requirement for adoption promotion and support to prevent instability and sustain adoptive families.

DAI looks forward to the Committee’s consideration of S1964 in the Fall. Thank you for your efforts to advance child welfare reform and empower parents and children. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for additional information.

April Dinwoodie
Chief Executive
(212) 925-4089
adinwoodie@adoptioninstitute.org

Donaldson Adoption Institute
120 E. 38th Street
New York, NY 10016