



Senator Grassley (R-IA) Announces Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Support Act

During a press conference on Tuesday May 20th, Senator Grassley (R, IA) announced the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Support Act, which proposes a number of positive legislative changes that would benefit the 510,000 children in foster care. If enacted, this bill would extend through 2013 the Adoption Incentive Program, whereby the federal government allocates financial rewards to states that have increased the number of children adopted from their foster care system. It would also increase adoption incentive payments by establishing 2007 as the program's new "base year" against which future performance would be measured. The bill would make all children with special needs adopted from foster care eligible for federal adoption assistance payments by exempting them from current income eligibility requirements. The bill would also establish relative guardianship as a permanency option for those children for whom courts have ruled that neither reunification nor adoption are viable permanency options, and allow states to receive federal reimbursement for assistance payments made to relative guardians. Finally, the bill would allow the federal government to allocate unobligated funds from the Adoption Incentive Program to states that increase the number of children exiting foster care through relative guardianship.