

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **National Council For Adoption Announces the Inaugural Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award Recipients, Governor Hickenlooper of Colorado and Governor Kasich of Ohio**

May 21, 2015 – Alexandria, VA – In recognition of the extraordinary leadership that has resulted in measurable progress towards addressing the crisis our nation faces, with more than 100,000 U.S. children in foster care who need permanent families, National Council For Adoption is pleased to announce that Governor John Hickenlooper of Colorado and Governor John Kasich of Ohio are inaugural recipients of the Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award. The Babineaux Award recognizes the Governors' notable achievements in leading their states to prioritize best practice services for children who are awaiting adoption out of foster care. National Council For Adoption is delighted to celebrate these notable achievements during May, National Foster Care Month, as we raise awareness of the continuing need of U.S. children in foster care awaiting adoption.

Governor John Hickenlooper of Colorado is receiving The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award to honor his inspiring leadership on behalf of children in Colorado foster care. In recent years, Colorado has made a number of best practice changes under his leadership that can bring long-term hope, change, and permanency to children waiting for families in Colorado foster care. Governor Hickenlooper's guidance has promoted an increase of awareness, support, and parent recruitment through public-private partnerships with faith- and community-based partners. Additionally, Governor Hickenlooper has continued to make changes that support youth in the foster care system up to 21, providing additional time for these children to prepare to be self-sufficient adults. Most recently, he expanded former foster care Medicaid coverage up to the age of 26.

The Babineaux Award will be presented to Governor Hickenlooper on May 26, 2015 at 2:00 pm in the West Foyer of the Colorado State Capitol Building.

Governor John Kasich of Ohio is receiving The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award in honor of his exceptional leadership on behalf of children in Ohio foster care. In recent years, Ohio has made a number of changes under his leadership that have impacted and will continue to provide positive change for children in Ohio foster care waiting for families. Governor Kasich has invested in grants through partnership with Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption that will use the renowned Wendy's Wonderful Kids child-focused recruitment model. National Council For Adoption commends this model as best practice, and national research has shown it to be extraordinarily successful in finding forever homes for children – especially those who have historically been considered harder to place, including older children, sibling groups, and children with special medical needs. The Governor's commitment to these kids is not only the right thing to do for kids, but is also is a wise investment with long-term dividends both in successful outcomes for children and in costs saved to provide support services so often needed by children who must exit, or "age out" of, care.

Governor Kasich's award will be presented on May 28th, 2015, at 3:45 pm. Ohio Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor will receive the award on the Governor's behalf in the Lieutenant Governor's Ceremonial Office in the Ohio Statehouse.

NCFA president and CEO Chuck Johnson says: "I'm very proud to offer the inaugural Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award to Governor Hickenlooper and Governor Kasich. They have shown a sincere commitment to finding forever families for children in foster care. We at National Council For Adoption hope the Governors' committed leadership to prioritizing loving, permanent homes for kids will serve as a model for other states."

#### About The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award

The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award honors individuals and organizations that have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure children experience the love and stability that come with a forever family. This award is given to those who have demonstrated the most selfless commitment to providing resources, education, and leadership to address the many challenges including parent recruitment, training, and support services necessary to give children safe, stable, and loving adoptive families. The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award acknowledges the dedicated efforts of those who have generously given their time, talents, and resources to ensure that all children can "come home" to a loving, forever family. The award is named for Adoption Hall of Fame recipients Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux who cared for more than 100 children in foster care during their decades-long tenure as foster and adoptive parents in Louisiana.

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#### **ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION**

*Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFA's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFA serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption.*

*For more information, visit [www.AdoptionCouncil.org](http://www.AdoptionCouncil.org).*