

Los Angeles Office:

4300 Long Beach Blvd., #750
Long Beach, CA 90807

Corporate Office:

801 E. Chapman #203
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714.680.9000 | f. 714.680.8207

Programs and Services

Adoption Agency
Family Preservation
Program
Family Reunification
Program
Foster Family Agency
Internship Programs
Residential Treatment
Unaccompanied
Children's Program
Unaccompanied
Refuge Minor Program
Volunteer Program
Wraparound Program

Specialty Programs

Pregnant/Parenting
Teen Support
Substance Abuse
Sexual Exploitation
Recovery

Locations

Escondido
Fullerton
Long Beach
Compton
Moreno Valley
Norwalk
Pomona
Rancho Dominguez
San Bernardino
Victorville

Mailing Address

PO Box 9
Fullerton, CA 92836-0009

Chief Executive Officer

Joyce R. Capelle

Chartered in 1966

A 501(c)3 nonprofit

Tax ID 95-2492427

ACCREDITED



COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION
SERVICES FOR FAMILIES
AND CHILDREN, INC.



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The Honorable Karen Bass
United States House of Representatives
408 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515



February 14, 2014

**RE: Strengthening the Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2013—
SUPPORT**

Via Facsimile: (202) 225-2422

Dear Representative Bass:

On behalf of Crittenton Services for Children and Families, we write to express our support for your "Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2013." This critical legislation comes at an important time when the various levels of government and stakeholders in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are at the table to find effective ways to collaborate in the prevention, intervention and reintegration of domestic minor sex trafficking victims.

Crittenton is a non-profit child welfare agency offering specialized, intensive residential treatment for minor girls from Los Angeles County who are identified as being commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). For over 40 years, Crittenton has operated in Southern California to serve the most traumatized and maltreated children and assist their families in finding stability and safety. The girls we treat who have been exploited often have a history of abuse prior to entering the system and come to us with suffering from the scars of cumulative trauma that result in significant emotional, mental and physical health issues. Even with the most effective intervention services, we find that there is a critical need to identify collaborative ways in the system that will better protect the most vulnerable children from the horrific experience of exploitation.

Your bill acknowledges the unfortunate reality that the population of exploited children have typically already been involved with the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. This speaks to the factors that initially make a child vulnerable, starting with a family in crisis and communities that have been devastated for generations by poverty, violence and upheaval. A child experiencing these factors and following removal from their family, is understandably emotionally devastated and requires additional supervision and supports. However, the system has been unable to respond to these children appropriately and requires new policy that will increase accountability and improve outcomes.

Specifically, we enthusiastically support the requirement that the Department of Health and Human Services develop and make public best practices for serving the population of children that are trafficking victims and those most at-risk. In our work, we know that children are often trafficked across multiple jurisdictions, making it imperative that our system's responses be streamlined and all share a basic foundation of victim-centered, trauma-focused and gender-responsive care to these

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devastated youth. Furthermore, the requirement for improved data collection will help guide our future planning and resource designation to ensure that agencies are better prepared to address these children's needs.

A child under the supervision of the state is a child especially in need of guidance, of love and support. While it is discouraging to know that so many of the children we see and treat have been failed by a system designed to protect them, we applaud your leadership in raising the standard of care for kids most desperate for care. HR 1732 is an important step in improving the safety of children and holding our systems of care accountable for the youth they serve.

Again, thank you for authoring this legislation and for your continued commitment to ending the trafficking of children. Crittenton is proud to stand with you as a partner in this fight and looks forward to the bill's progress. If we may be of service in any capacity, please do not hesitate to contact Joyce Capelle, President and Chief Executive Officer at (714) 680-9061 or jcapelle@crittentonsocal.org or Stefanie Benvenuto at (714) 336-6536 or sbenvenuto@crittentonsocal.org.

Sincerely,

Joyce Capelle
President & CEO

Stefanie Benvenuto
Director, Public Policy & Advocacy

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