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Foster Family Agency
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Unaccompanied
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Chief Executive Officer

Joyce R. Capelle

Chartered in 1966

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June 4, 2013

The Honorable Rose DeLauro
2413 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



Dear Representative DeLauro:

On behalf of Crittenton Services for Children and Families, we write in support of your House Resolution 1833, the *Improving the Juvenile Justice System for Girls Act of 2013*, which would authorize gender-responsive services, including trauma-informed treatment, to receive grant funding under the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974. Since 1966, Crittenton Services has been a leader in the treatment of at-risk youth in Southern California, and maintains a 54 bed campus dedicated to girls referred by the local juvenile justice systems.

As a part of the National Crittenton Foundation and a direct service provider to youth in the juvenile justice system, we were invited to contribute to the Georgetown Center on Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy's report *Improving Juvenile Justice System for Girls: Lessons from the States*. Chief among the report's findings was the need to respond and treat the prevalence of trauma in the female juvenile justice population.

This trauma, found in over 70% of girls in the system, has a profound, negative effect on the emotional and mental health of children; often resulting in arrested development and an inability to communicate effectively and mature at a normal pace. Currently, when the effects result in a child entering the justice system, there are not adequate resources to address the root cause-- only the behavioral symptoms. This can result in inefficient treatment, or worse, the retraumatization of these children. HR 1833 addresses that issue by opening the door to gender-responsive and trauma-informed services for this underserved population.

Allowing for gender-responsive services to receive grant funding not only benefits the increasing number of girls entering the juvenile justice system but provides an incentive for organizations throughout the country to develop the most effective treatment options. The potential for allocating resources to the overlooked girls in the justice system will spur growth and progress on behalf of this population and better inform prevention practices.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We are pleased to support your legislation and look forward to working with you further to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

Joyce Capelle
President & CEO

Stefanie Benvenuto
Director, Public Policy & Advocacy