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For every \$7 available for children in foster care, only \$1 is available to invest in a wider array of services that prevent the need for foster care.

**The federal government makes available about \$4.8 billion a year under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to maintain children in foster care.**

By comparison, about \$652 million a year under Title IV-B is available to be invested in a wider array of practices and interventions that keep more children safe and make more families strong.

Last year, about 223,000 children across the country were removed from their families and placed in foster care. But annually more than 3 million children are involved in investigations or assessments of abuse, neglect or other issues that can profoundly impact their opportunities to grow up happy, healthy and prepared to succeed in life. Increasingly, drug addiction and the opioid epidemic are putting even more pressure on families and the systems that support them.

Our nation has a tremendous opportunity to transform America's child welfare system to ensure more of these children and their families receive the support they need. But we must make smarter, more effective investments in the kinds of interventions that safely reduce the need for foster care and promote stronger families.

The federal government provides approximately \$7.8 billion annually to states through its two main

sources of dedicated child welfare funding, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. Rather than promoting innovative and proven approaches that better serve children and keep them safe, the bulk of federal funding is spent on maintaining children in foster care.

Restrictive funding rules hinder the ways that child welfare systems can work with their communities to keep children safe. Today, more than half of the states have been granted limited and temporary authority to demonstrate how federal funding can be better invested to improve outcomes for children and families. It is time for broadscale change that can better support all vulnerable children in America to grow up in safe, stable and permanent families.

In March, the federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities released a national strategy to protect our nation's children from harm. The commissioners unanimously agreed that changes are needed in financing at the federal level.

Transforming child welfare to dramatically improve the opportunities and outcomes for children doesn't need to begin with the appropriation of more money, but it must begin with states and local systems having the ability to make smarter, more effective investments in what works best.