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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1402

January 13, 2020

The Honorable Eric Holcomb
Governor
State of Indiana
State House Room 206
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Dear Governor Holcomb:

I write to provide an update on changes Congress has made to bring our child welfare system into the 21st century. As Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support, I am proud to have played a role in shaping these changes and look forward to finding ways to partner together to ensure these reforms can help keep more vulnerable Indiana families together and offer a brighter future for our communities.

As you know, the *Family First Prevention Services Act* (Family First), signed into law last February, will help keep more children safely with their families and out of foster care. Family First supports states in providing evidence-based services to prevent children from entering foster care, encourages states to place children with foster families instead of in group homes, and reduces bureaucracy for—and provides help to—relatives so more children can live with extended family if they are required to be removed from their homes.

Congress established an aggressive timeline to transform our nation's child welfare systems, and many states, including Indiana, requested additional time and resources to ensure the successful implementation of Family First. I was happy to work on a bipartisan basis with Subcommittee Chairman Danny Davis on legislation to address these legitimate concerns. President Trump recently signed the *Family First Transition Act* (Transition Act) into law so that states like Indiana will have the tools necessary to shift to more evidence-based services and keep families together as intended by the Family First Act.

The Transition Act includes roughly an additional \$11.6 million in funding to help the State of Indiana's transition under Family First and provides insurance to states like Indiana that operated child welfare demonstration projects that ended on October 1, 2019, guaranteeing they will not face a large financial shortfall as they transition to the new law.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Indiana Department of Child Services Director Terry Stigdon last year to learn more about Indiana's plans and priorities for Family First. Now that the Transition Act is law, I am happy to act as a resource for both you and Director Stigdon as the state moves forward with its transition. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

Jackie Walorski

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress
Indiana Second District

CC:

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