

By Senator Wise

5-04515-09

20092784

Senate Resolution

A resolution calling on the United States Congress to authorize and President Barack Obama to convene a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010.

WHEREAS, many children in the United States face serious challenges, including an estimated 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect, and nearly 900,000 reports of child abuse and neglect are substantiated each year, and

WHEREAS, more than 500,000 children and youth are in foster care at the end of the federal fiscal year and nearly 800,000 spend at least some time in care throughout the year, and

WHEREAS, while 50,000 children are adopted from the public child welfare system each year, more than 117,000 children are waiting to be adopted, and

WHEREAS, each year approximately 22,000 youth leave the foster care system not because they have found a permanent family but because they have reached the age at which foster care assistance ends, and

WHEREAS, there is an over-representation of certain populations, including Native Americans and African Americans, within the child welfare system, and

WHEREAS, the number of children being raised by grandparents and other relatives is increasing and should be encouraged, and the Federal Government has recognized through federal law that kinship care is an important permanency and placement option for many children, and

WHEREAS, the state courts are key decisionmakers in the lives of children involved in the child welfare system and

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30 should be supported as they determine whether abuse or neglect
31 has occurred, whether a child should be reunified with his or
32 her family, or whether the child should be adopted or placed in
33 another setting, and

34 WHEREAS, the child welfare system includes a professional
35 workforce in the courts, public and private child welfare
36 agencies, mental health and health care programs, education
37 settings, citizen review panels, and volunteers such as court-
38 appointed special advocates, which should be strengthened, and

39 WHEREAS, the challenge of child abuse cannot be effectively
40 addressed in a sustained manner until the nation addresses the
41 outcomes for children in a comprehensive way, and

42 WHEREAS, the White House Conference on Children and Youth
43 had been the oldest White House conference starting in 1909 and
44 continuing every 10 years until the last conference in 1970, and

45 WHEREAS, these conferences resulted in significant policies
46 over the decades, including the creation of the Children's
47 Bureau and standards of care for children, and focused attention
48 on critical needs of American's children, NOW, THEREFORE,

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50 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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52 That the Senate respectfully calls on the United States
53 Congress to authorize and President Barack Obama to convene a
54 White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010.