

NEWS . . .

The Child Care Association of Illinois

413 West Monroe, Springfield, IL 62704

Phone: (217) 528-4409

FAX: (217) 528-649

For Immediate Release

2 March 2009

Contact:

Marge Berglind, 312-819-1950

David Ormsby, 312-342-9638

Illinois House Panel Approves Lang Bill to Boost Foster Parent Reimbursement by One-Time \$24 Million Grant

(Springfield, IL) – An Illinois House legislative panel on Thursday endorsed a one-time \$24 million grant to reimburse foster parents for increased expenses related to caring for the state’s abused and neglected children.

The Illinois House Human Services Appropriation Committee voted 19-0 to include the money in the state’s new Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

“Foster parents have had only two increases in eight years to pay expenses to feed, clothe, house, and transport foster children and inflation has deeply eroded the value of the state reimbursement,” said Marge Berglind, the President and CEO of the Child Care Association of Illinois, the bill’s chief supporter.

Berglind noted, on average, an Illinois foster parent spends \$703 per month—of that \$281 comes out of the foster parent’s pocket.

A national report on foster parent under-funding released two years ago by two national organizations and the University of Maryland said Illinois’ average rates (for children 2, 9, and 16) were \$380, \$422, and \$458 per month and they needed to be raised to \$661, \$757, and \$830 to meet actual costs.

The legislation, House Bill 83, sponsored by state Rep. Lou Lang (D-Skokie), provides a one-time payment this year of \$24 million to the state's 7,500 foster parents. The payments would average \$145 per foster child.

"It's an embarrassment that DCFS seeks volunteer foster parents to care for abused and neglected children and then refuses to pay the full cost of care," said Lang. "This one-time \$24 million grant attempts to address DCFS' negligence."

"We applaud Rep. Lang for his leadership and willingness to address the state's underfunding of foster children care," said Berglund.

State Representatives Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), Deb Mell (D-Chicago) and Eddie Washington (D-Waukegan) are the bill's co-chief sponsors.

The measure now moves to the full House floor.