



COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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County Child Welfare Agencies Praise Federally Funded Guardianship Rule Change

Obama Administration Agrees to Apply New Funding Rules to Guardianship Cases

SACRAMENTO, CA – California’s county child welfare agencies applauded a decision announced today by the Obama Administration that will allow states to receive federal funding for children placed with relative guardians.

The decision means that states with longstanding relative guardianship programs, like California, will be able to participate in a new federally funded guardianship program created by the 2008 Fostering Connections to Success Act. Instructions issued in December 2008 by the outgoing Bush Administration had essentially precluded states from transferring their existing guardianship cases into the new federal program.

“We are relieved that President Obama understands the importance of supporting states that moved ahead with these effective programs before the 2008 legislation,” said Frank Mecca, Executive Director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA). “The state’s Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program has been very successful at getting abused and neglected children out of foster care and into permanent, loving homes with relatives.”

California and its counties have operated the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program since 2000. The Kin-GAP program enables children who would otherwise be in the foster care system to be cared for by relatives, thus providing a stable home to at-risk children and saving millions of dollars in foster care costs.

“Finding relative guardians for abused and neglected children is a win-win,” Mecca said. “Not only does it provide stability for these children, it saves the federal government, the state and counties a substantial amount of money. We are very pleased that the Administration took this action today.”

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CWDA is a non-profit association representing the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. The Association's mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect.