



## County Welfare Directors Association of California

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# CWDA

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**To:** County Welfare Directors Association of California

**From:** Tom Joseph, Director, CWDA Washington, D.C. Office

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**Re:** Federal Update

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### **House Passes Federal CSEC Bills**

Only two weeks after the bills moved through committees, on May 20 the House adopted five bills addressing child sex trafficking. Among the bills, the *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act* ([H.R. 4058](#)) contains a number of provisions affecting child welfare agencies, including changes to child welfare practice overall. Provisions include: developing and implementing policies to identify screen and provide services for children in the child welfare system who may be, or are at risk of becoming child sex trafficking victims; implementing a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" already in California law for all foster children so that foster parents are able to allow foster youth to participate in more activities which are age-appropriate without having to seek agency approval; providing foster youth 14 or older with greater involvement in their case-planning by allowing the youth to select two additional individuals for their case; and, eliminating the current option to make Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) the permanency goal for youth under age 16.

Among the other bills the House passed, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* (H.R. 3530), would provide \$5 million nationally in competitive grants to states and localities to coordinate among agencies, train staff and provide support services. While the fund is very small, it would mark the first time federal funds assisted states and localities in responding to sex trafficking challenges.

In December 2013, the Senate Finance Committee passed a bill similar to H.R. 4058. That measure, (S. 1870) also contains a reauthorization of the adoption assistance program and improvements to the child support program. Discussions with staff to Senate Finance Committee members indicate that the overall Senate bill may be modified slightly and considered on the floor perhaps as early as mid-July. Visits with staff on both sides of Capitol Hill indicate continued confidence that a bill containing adoption assistance, child support and sex trafficking provisions will be sent to President Obama this year.

### **Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization Awaits Final Action**

Last month, House and Senate leaders announced that they negotiated a compromise agreement to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Discussions occurred behind the scenes. To be called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

(H.R. 803, as amended), the bill retains local control over workforce programs, maintains funding and eliminates a few programs while preserving core programs such as adult employment and training activities, youth workforce investment programs and the dislocated worker program. While the timing for final passage is not yet set, the Senate will consider the bill first, followed by House action. The Obama administration has not expressed a position on the final compromise but it has indicated it was pleased with the bipartisan efforts to arrive at a reauthorization. WIA was due for a reauthorization 11 years ago.

### **Senate Confirms Burwell as HHS Secretary**

Yesterday, the Senate confirmed, 78 to 17, Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the White House's budget director for the past year, as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. She will be sworn into office on Monday. She is viewed as a strong manager and received bipartisan acclaim for her work at the Office of Management and Budget. The 17 Republican Senators who voted 'no' did so predominately due to their continued opposition to the Affordable Care Act.