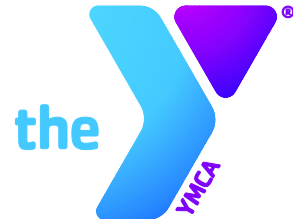




MENTOR
THE NATIONAL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP



November 17, 2015

The Honorable Mike Bishop (MI-08)
United States House of Representatives
428 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff (CA-28)
United States House of Representatives
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Bishop and Schiff:

The undersigned organizations who provide services to America's youth — including mentoring programs, summer camps, out of school time programs, sports and aquatic programs, clubs, and more — write to express our overwhelming support for the Child Protection Improvements Act (CPIA). This legislation will create universal access to national FBI fingerprint background checks of potential volunteers and staff of youth-serving organizations and other nonprofits supporting vulnerable populations.

Organizations providing critical services to youth must be able to effectively, affordably, and reliably screen their volunteers and employees to ensure they do not have an inappropriate criminal past that might endanger the young people they serve. Utilizing an FBI fingerprint background check as part of a comprehensive screening is the most complete and reliable means of checking an individual's criminal record, and is the only type of background check that is truly available on a nationwide basis. **Unfortunately, the current background check system is not universally accessible for youth-serving organizations.** Less than half of states allow a wide range of youth-serving organizations to access these national searches. Even in states where FBI searches are accessible, they are often prohibitively expensive and time-consuming.

We know from the PROTECT Act Child Safety Pilot that FBI searches provide information that is absolutely critical for screening youth-serving volunteers and employees. Results from the pilot showed that more than 6 percent of the nearly 105,000 volunteers screened with FBI searches had criminal records of concern — including extremely serious crimes like child sexual abuse, cruelty to children, and even murder. In addition, more than 41 percent of individuals with criminal records had crimes in states other than where they were applying to volunteer — meaning that only a nationwide check would have revealed these serious criminal offenses.

CPIA would build on the lessons learned through the Child Safety Pilot and finally provide universal access to FBI fingerprint background checks for all youth-serving organizations wishing to use them. The bill creates an efficient way for youth-serving organizations to access FBI fingerprint checks at a reasonable cost with optimized turnaround time.

We fully support this legislation and will do whatever we can to ensure its passage in the 114th Congress. Thank you again for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A World Fit for Kids!

After-School All-Stars

Afterschool Alliance

Amachi, Inc.

American Camp Association

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

Catholic Charities USA

College Mentors for Kids, Inc.

Concerned Black Men National

First Focus

Friends of the Children

Futures Without Violence

Girl Scouts of the USA

Girls Inc.

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Mentors, Inc.

My Sister's Circle

National Alliance for Faith and Justice

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

National Human Services Association

National PTA

Spark

Spark Action

The First Tee

U.S. Dream Academy

U.S. Soccer Foundation

Up2Us

YMCA of the USA