



## **Child Protection Improvements Act (CPIA)**

Sponsors:

**H.R. 695:** Adam Schiff (CA-28) and Mike Bishop (MI-08)

**S. 705:** Orrin Hatch (UT) and Al Franken (MN)

- The Child Protection Improvements Act (CPIA) is a **bipartisan** bill that would allow organizations serving vulnerable populations (children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities) to conduct fast, accurate and affordable background checks on prospective volunteers and employees.
- The FBI's fingerprint-based background checks are a critical component of a comprehensive background check process, but thousands of organizations don't have access or they are too expensive to afford.
- CPIA builds on the success of the PROTECT Act's Child Safety pilot which ran from 2003 until 2011. The pilot provided direct access to FBI fingerprint background checks for a variety of child-serving nonprofit organizations. Well over 100,000 background checks were performed during the pilot and found that more than 6 percent of the potential volunteers had criminal records of concern (based on criterion offenses established specifically for the pilot). **Forty-two percent of the individuals with criminal records of concern had crimes in states other than where they were applying to volunteer – meaning that only a nationwide check would have flagged these individuals' criminal records.**
- Specifically, CPIA amends the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system. The bill:
  - Ensures that organizations that serve vulnerable populations (children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities) nationwide have access to FBI fingerprint background checks. **No organization would be required to utilize these fingerprint checks under CPIA.**
  - **Protects privacy rights** by ensuring that the specifics of a criminal record are never disclosed without explicit consent by the volunteer or potential staff and provide an opportunity for individuals to correct errors in their records with the FBI.
  - **Does NOT authorize new spending.** The program will be supported by the fees assessed for performing the background checks. Specifically, CPIA caps the cost of such a check at no more than \$18.
- At its core, **CPIA is about providing information to organizations to enable discussion and informed decision-making about potential volunteers and staff wishing to work with children** and other vulnerable populations.
- Under CPIA, a criminal record would NOT automatically disqualify someone from volunteering.
- CPIA directly benefits millions of children and adults across the nation who are involved with mentoring organizations, after-school programs, youth sports, summer camps, and more.
- MENTOR recommends FBI fingerprint checks be included as part of a comprehensive background screening process in the evidence-based standards book [\*The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring\*](#). A thorough, quality background check is especially important in mentoring relationships where the mentor and mentee are often unsupervised.