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August 24, 2015

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden,

On behalf of National Children's Alliance, the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers and the almost 800 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) serving victims of child abuse and child sex trafficking throughout the U.S., I want to thank you for your partnership with and continued support of CACs, and urge you to cosponsor S. 1665, the *Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Act*.

Also known as the "Federal Erin's Law", S. 1665 helps protect children from sexual abuse by federally funding age-appropriate education programs for primary and secondary school students on how to recognize and safely report sexual abuse. Twenty-six states, including Oregon, have already passed a version of "Erin's Law". S. 1665 will work together with these statutes by providing additional funding necessary for implementation. While we are excited that language allowing states to use their current education dollars for Erin's Law programs was included in the senate's version of the proposed Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization, new funding is needed. Thus, we wholeheartedly support S. 1665 and its federal funding component, and urge you to cosponsor this much-needed legislation.

National Children's Alliance is the member-accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). CACs are child-focused facilities in which multidisciplinary teams of law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental healthcare providers, and victim advocates coordinate their efforts to investigate and treat child abuse, while also holding offenders accountable. These centers provide forensic interviews, medical evaluations, trauma-focused mental healthcare and victim advocacy for victims of child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Last year, CACs served more than 315,000 child abuse and trafficking victims, and provided child abuse prevention education to more than 1.6 million individuals in the U.S. alone.

Because CACs have been on the front lines in intervening and preventing child abuse for almost 30 years, we believe that child protection is and should be our number one priority, especially within the schools. S. 1665 is needed to ensure that Erin's Law programs are available and fully funded in all schools. Sadly, no law will ever completely eliminate the crime of child abuse. But by providing age-appropriate education programs to primary and secondary school students on how to recognize and safely report sexual abuse, we will provide yet another layer of protection for our children and communities.

Child sexual abuse is a far too common experience for America's children. And, child sexual abuse is preventable. It is for this reason that we support S. 1665, the *Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Act*, and ask you to consider adding your name as a cosponsor.

Sincerely,

Teresa Huizar
Executive Director
National Children's Alliance