

## THE TRAUMA INFORMED CARE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT (H.R. 1757/ S.774)

### BACKGROUND

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have far-reaching implications on health, education, and life outcomes. **60 percent of American children have been exposed to violence, crime or abuse in their homes, schools and communities.**<sup>i</sup> **40 percent of American children were direct victims of two or more violent acts and one in 10 were victims of violence five or more times.**<sup>ii</sup>
- Researchers have found that exposure to multiple childhood traumas such as sexual abuse, emotional neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse among household members, and other ACEs can cause **long-term negative physical and emotional health outcomes** such as heart disease, cancer and depression, and can also lead to **difficulties with educational attainment**, resulting in poor school performance, lower GPAs, higher numbers of school absences, decreased reading abilities and increased numbers of suspensions, expulsions and dropouts.<sup>iii iv</sup>
- Girls who experience multiple childhood traumas are at heightened risk of contact with the juvenile justice system and other negative outcomes. In a study of ACEs among justice-involved youth, **45 percent of girls had experienced five or more ACEs**, making their rate of complex trauma nearly twice as high as boys.<sup>v</sup>
- Children of color are at an increased risk of experiencing traumatic events – such as displacement, sexual abuse, poverty, witnessing violence, or experiencing racial discrimination<sup>vi</sup> - and are much less likely to receive treatment to address trauma. This leads to disparate rates of post-traumatic stress.<sup>vii</sup>
- The implementation of timely and appropriate trauma-informed approaches and interventions in care can help **prevent and mitigate** the effects of trauma.

### WHAT THE TRAUMA INFORMED CARE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT DOES

- Creates a federal interagency task force comprised of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice and tribal agencies to identify best practices for supporting children that have experienced trauma.
- Requires the Centers for Disease Control to improve data collection on the prevalence of trauma and directs them to conduct studies on existing barriers to coordination.
- Creates funding for grants to disseminate best practices to teachers, doctors, direct service providers and first responders to help children who have experienced trauma.
- Creates coordinating centers for law enforcement and tribal agencies to share information, increase awareness, and enhance training on trauma and its impact.
- Increases funding to the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative to test new models for improving trauma-informed prevention and care.

### PLEASE CO-SPONSOR THE TRAUMA INFORMED CARE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT

- The Trauma Informed Care for Children and Families Act spreads positive approaches and interventions for preventing and diminishing the impacts of trauma on children and families.
- Research confirms that ACEs can have significant long-term impacts on a young person's physical and mental health, as well as on their education and life outcomes. The Trauma Informed Care for Children and Families Act directly addresses the impacts of trauma on children across the country.

- The Trauma Informed Care for Children and Families Act meets children where they are – in schools, in social service and after school programs, and at home—to equip those providing them with care with the proper tools and training to prevent and mitigate the effects of trauma.

## Please support American children by co-sponsoring the Trauma Informed Care for Children and Families Act.

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<sup>i</sup> The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2014). Resilience and Child Traumatic Stress, Retrieved 13 January 2017 from [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/resilience\\_and\\_child\\_traumatic\\_stress\\_0316.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/resilience_and_child_traumatic_stress_0316.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2010). Defending Childhood. Retrieved 15 January 2017 from <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ag/legacy/2010/09/23/dc-factsheet.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> Vincent J. Felitti, et al. Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 14.4 (1998): 245-58. Retrieved 15 January 2017 from [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(98)00017-8/abstract).

<sup>iv</sup> Agelique G. Day. Evaluation of a Trauma-Informed School Intervention with Girls in a Residential Facility School: Student Perceptions of School Environment. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 24:10 (2015). Retrieved 15 January 2017 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10926771.2015.1079279>.

<sup>v</sup> Saar, M.S., Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L. and Vafa, Y. The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story. Human Rights Project for Girls. Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, and Ms. Foundation for Women (2015) at p. 8-9. See also Balck, A. Gender Injustice: System-Level Juvenile Justice Reforms for Girls. The National Crittenton Foundation and the National Women's Law Center (2015) at p. 20 and 26.

<sup>vi</sup> Institute for Safe Families. (2013). Findings from the Philadelphia Urban Ace Survey. Retrieved 15 January 2017 from <http://www.instituteforsafefamilies.org/sites/default/files/isfFiles/Philadelphia%20Urban%20ACE%20Report%202013.pdf>.

<sup>vii</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2015). Dismantling the Pipeline: Addressing the Needs of Young Women and Girls of Color Involved in Intervening Public Systems. Retrieved 15 January 2017 from <http://www.cssp.org/pages/body/WGOC-policy-oct2015-spreads.pdf>