



March 22, 2017

Secretary Thomas Price, M.D.
Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

**Re : Family-Friendly Budget Cutting Suggestions for
Wasteful Programs Administered by HHS**

Dear Secretary Price:

We and the many additional undersigned organizations are national groups comprised of families—moms, dads, and children. Our combined membership totals hundreds of thousands of United States citizens, and we attend to the interests of all families nationwide. At a crucial moment for federal agency waste-trimming, we respectfully write to offer some suggestions about how your office might save trillions of dollars in wasteful federal spending which is intended to help families, but which, in fact, harms them.

We encourage abandonment of the wasteful and poisonous “Title IV-D” program (authorized under the Social Security Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. § 658(a)) administered by HHS, whereby the federal government redirects billions of dollars from social security funds to states. Title IV-D absurdly rewards states for collecting child support from broken families by paying localities dollar-for-dollar “matching” federal funds for each dollar collected from a child support debtor.

This “matching scheme” effectively bribes state family courts to maximize child support awards by re-arranging child custody between parents to impose an artificial “visitor” parent and “custodial” parent status. Almost without exception, the family court designates the high-wage-earner parent as a “visitor” who is thereafter required to pay child support to the “custodial” parent. “Visitor” parents who fail to make child support payments are frequently jailed—even if they are unable to pay.

One in eight currently-incarcerated Americans is jailed because of non-payment of child support. Incarcerating a non-violent parent in a draconian debtor’s prison is expensive, unconstitutional, and harmful to children’s well-being. Incarceration of a non-violent parent suspends or extinguishes a valuable parent-child relationship. It also prevents the imprisoned parent from earning income to pay child support through current employment, and inevitably inhibits the parent—now saddled with a criminal record—from obtaining future employment.

The title IV-D program also discourages family courts from establishing fair and child-promoting co-parenting plans. The monetary incentives favoring one “custodial” parent also encourages divorce, and are a major reason why 24 million American children are now growing up in single-parent households. Equitable custody arrangements are the best solution to ensuring consistent payment of child support, and ensuring peace and financial stability for American families.

To fund, administer, and enforce the Title IV-D program, the federal government grants about six billion dollars each year to the states. No restrictions are imposed on how the states spend these funds. Not surprisingly, federal “matching” funds are rarely spent on family-supporting programs. Instead they are used to build up a huge “family-court industrial complex” made up of quack psychologists, corrupt “guardians ad litem,” and child-support bounty hunters. And then there are the tens of thousands of prison staff whose job it is to watch over parents whose only crime is an inability to pay a court-imposed support award. If there are swamps that need draining, this “family-court industrial complex” built with federal funds to persecute non-violent debtor parents should be right at the top of the list.

The six billion dollars in wasteful Title IV-D funds is just the tip of the iceberg. By accepting the provisions of Title IV-D, a state can dip into funding from TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families—Title IV-A). This is a program which costs HHS nearly a trillion dollars each year. TANF is rife with corruption. Across the United States local “child protection” entities are removing healthy, happy children from “good enough” families, and adopting them out—all because they receive TANF incentive funds, which average \$6,000 per child. This “kids for cash” arrangement is simply child trafficking—funded by us, the American taxpayers.

Draining the swamp of federal Title IV-D and TANF funds will not only save trillions, it will also help make millions of American families great again. It is well-known that children raised in single-parent households perform far worse than children from intact families. Further, it is well-established that family dissolution is a significant triggering factor in depression, substance abuse, crime, poverty, suicide, and homicide. Nevertheless, these federal programs encourage exactly such tragic outcomes.

Since the inception of family-focused welfare programs in the 1960s, single-parent families among white families have increased from 5% to 40% today. Among African American families that number has skyrocketed from 20% in the 1960’s to nearly 80% today. By removing the insidious incentives of governments to destroy families, you can not only save American taxpayers trillions of dollars, you also empower families—not crooked courts—to reach child-promoting arrangements that keep both parents active and involved in raising their children.

We hope you would agree with the many undersigned organizations—diverting federal funds *away from* demonstrably *un-healthy* “human services” which encourage family dissolution will greatly contribute to the health and wealth of *millions* of American families and children. Such families are better-served by support and encouragement within their communities, faith, families, and support networks, all of which may be funded and administered locally.

Thank you for your attention, and congratulations on your successful appointment. As families, the undersigned share your values of integrity, family cohesion, and independence from government interference. We hope to work together to bring sanity back to federal budgeting priorities.

Sincerely,

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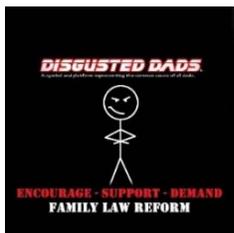
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