

Voice for Adoption

SPEAKING OUT FOR OUR NATION'S WAITING CHILDREN

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2009 Advocacy Agenda

Voice for Adoption focuses our advocacy efforts on improving the lives of the 129,000 children and youth in our nation's foster care system who are waiting to be adopted and the families who adopt children from foster care. We believe that every child deserves and needs permanent family relationships. We support all forms of permanency that provide children with true, life-long permanent family connections.

Our Core Advocacy Priorities

- *Supporting Post-Adoption Services* — VFA calls for dedicated federal funding for post-adoption services and efforts to promote the availability of adoption-competent mental health and other services for children and families.
- *Improving and Extending the Adoption Tax Credit* — VFA calls for changes to the federal adoption tax credit to make the credit more accessible and more effective at promoting and supporting adoptions from foster care.
- *Reauthorizing and Improving the Adoption Opportunities Program* — VFA calls for the reauthorization of the Adoption Opportunities program and dedicating a significant percentage (e.g., 40%) of the program funding toward grants for post-adoption support and efforts to address overrepresentation of children and youth of color in foster care.
- *Amending the Interethnic Adoption Provisions* — VFA calls for amendments to the Interethnic Adoption Provisions to allow race/ethnicity to be one of the factors considered in permanency planning and in the preparation of families adopting transracially. We also advocate for enforcement of the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requirement to recruit families who represent the racial and ethnic backgrounds of children in foster care, and provide funding to support such recruitment.
- *Funding Adoption Incentives* — VFA calls for Congress to fully fund the recently reauthorized Adoption Incentive Program—with an increased focus on the adoption of older children and children with special needs from foster care—at \$43 million, with the intention that any funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year be reinvested into technical assistance that will promote the adoption of older children awaiting adoption.
- *Breaking Down Barriers to Interstate Adoptions* — VFA calls for Congress to support funding the interstate placement bonuses at \$10 million to encourage the process to expedite adoptions across state lines.

1220 L St. NW, Suite 100-344, Washington, DC 20005
202-210-8118 | voiceforadoption@gmail.com
www.voice-for-adoption.org