

For Immediate Release

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Grassley works to promote adoption of children in foster care

Iowa senator receives Legislator of the Year award from national adoption organization

WASHINGTON --- Senator Chuck Grassley today received a “Legislator of the Year” award from **Voice for Adoption**, a national organization dedicated to “speaking out for our nation’s waiting children.”

“Improving opportunities for children and young adults is one of the most important things we can do as a society, and it’s been a priority of mine for a long time,” Grassley said. “By continuing to work together, we can do more to break down the barriers to adoption so that every child feels the relief of a solid family. Every child has a right to a safe and loving home.”

Every November, during National Adoption Month, **Voice for Adoption** coordinates a program called the Adoptive Family Portrait Project, which highlights families who adopt from foster care by displaying the family’s photo and story in the Washington office of their senator or representative. Grassley said the program is a “heartfelt way to promote and celebrate the love and good will that adoption represents.” Photos of this year’s featured families were displayed at the Capitol Hill event where Grassley received his award this afternoon. [Click here](#) for video.

Twelve years ago, Grassley worked to advance the *Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997*. Since its enactment, adoptions increased to 54,000 per year, and many states have doubled their adoptions from foster care.

The *Deficit Reduction Act of 2005* included funding championed by Grassley for grants to train judges, attorneys and legal personnel in child welfare cases, as well as grants to strengthen and improve collaboration between the courts and child welfare agencies. Funding for the court improvement and collaboration grants is scheduled to end at the end of the next fiscal year, and Grassley has said he would work for continuation of necessary funding. Grassley also has worked to protect federal funding for Social Services Block Grants that help fund child welfare services.

In 2006, the Finance Committee held the first hearings on child welfare in over a decade. The hearings were part of an effort that led to passage of the *Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006*, which Grassley developed as Finance Committee Chairman and shepherded through Congress. The legislation improved programs aimed at helping troubled families, provided grants for states and community organizations to combat methamphetamine addiction and other substance abuse, and increased case worker visits for children in foster care.

Last year, Grassley was part of a bipartisan effort to pass the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008*. This new law represented the most significant and

far-reaching improvements to child welfare in over a decade. It provided additional federal incentives for states to move children from foster care to adoptive homes. It included legislation Grassley had introduced in May 2008 to make it easier for foster children to be permanently cared for by their own relatives, including grandparents and aunts and uncles, and to stay in their own home communities. The Grassley provisions in the law also made all children with special needs eligible for federal adoption assistance. Previously, that assistance had been limited to children who are removed from very low-income families. The law broke new ground by establishing opportunities to help kids who age out of the foster care system at age 18 by giving states the option to extend their care and helping them pursue education or vocational training.

Grassley's 2008 legislation was supported by more than 500 organizations across the country, including Iowa organizations like the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, Boys and Girls Home and Family Services of Sioux City, Family Resources of Davenport, the Iowa Citizen Action Network and Orchard Place of Des Moines. Other organizations supporting the legislation include the Children's Defense Fund, the Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now campaign sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and the National Foster Care Coalition.