

**Testimony of Alex J. Adams**  
**Nominee of President Trump to be**  
**Assistant Secretary for Children and Families**  
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
July 22, 2025

Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for considering my nomination to be the Assistant Secretary for Family Support. I am honored by President Trump's nomination and deeply humbled by the confidence placed in me. I look forward to working with President Trump and Secretary Kennedy to Make America Healthy Again.

Before I begin, I would like to thank my wife, Jen, who is here with me today from Eagle, Idaho, and our beautiful 6-year-old daughter, Emerson, who is watching from home and hoping that this wraps up before Bluey. I am grateful for my family's support. Families are everything – and that is why I am here. Simply put, every child deserves a family, and every family should have pathways to opportunity.

My route to this nomination is through state government leadership. Over the past decade, I have been entrusted to lead four distinct state government agencies spanning health professional regulation, education innovation, state budgeting, and health and human services. This broad-based public administration experience has prepared me well for the responsibilities of leading the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and equipped me with the collaborative leadership necessary to drive meaningful change.

I will bring a state view to federal policymaking at a time when President Trump has called for a renewed commitment to federalism. My current agency administers over 100 federal grants – many under ACF's purview – giving me firsthand insight into the careful balance needed between state innovation and federal oversight. Simply put, I believe federal policy should seek to empower, not diminish, state and tribal governments to meet the unique needs of their communities, and I believe federal policy should strengthen, not supplant, parents' capacity to make the best decisions for their children. I will seek to provide states, tribal governments, and parents maximum flexibility under the law.

Two experiences have shaped my approach to this work.

First, I served as Idaho's budget director—our equivalent of the Office of Management and Budget—where I developed statewide budget recommendations with the Governor. I am most proud we achieved a AAA credit rating for the first time in state history, grew our investments in public education, and built the largest reserve balances Idaho has ever seen. As you well know, budgeting required tough choices and tradeoffs. This experience instilled in me a deep respect for the connection between fiscal health and family well-being. If confirmed, I will bring a budget-conscious, outcome-oriented approach to stewarding taxpayer dollars.

Second, in leading Idaho's health and human services agency, I've had the privilege of engaging with some of the most complex and human challenges in state government. These challenges are

much more than just numbers on a budget spreadsheet, they're real people. And despite the polarization in today's politics, I have found that child welfare remains a bipartisan cause.

I worked with Idaho legislators on both sides of the aisle to strengthen kinship placements, accelerate permanency timelines, extend foster care to age 23, and make record investments in child welfare prevention – all with broad, bipartisan support. These Idaho reforms echo the spirit of the landmark Family First Prevention Services Act that President Trump signed and, most recently, the Supporting America's Children and Families Act, signed by the previous administration. These are not Republican or Democratic issues, they are simply the right thing to do.

I agree with President Trump when he said “the best foster care system is one that is not needed in the first place.” If confirmed, I look forward to advancing this work with President Trump, Secretary Kennedy, and partnering with you on shared priorities, including:

- Accelerating evidence-based prevention services in child welfare;
- Recruiting and retaining qualified foster families;
- Speeding time to permanency for children eligible for adoption;
- Improving outcomes for youth aging out of care;
- Increasing access to high-quality, affordable childcare and strengthening Head Start;
- Promoting upward mobility and breaking generational cycles of poverty;
- Reducing administrative burdens on states and tribes while upholding accountability.

I know that together we can make a difference on these issues and more.

As I wrap up, I'd be remiss, Mr. Chairman, if I didn't note ACF's Idaho roots. Its oldest program – the Children's Bureau -- was created in a 1912 bill spearheaded by Idaho's own Senator William Borah. I'd be honored to carry on this legacy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored by this nomination and respectfully request your support. I look forward to your questions.