National Crittenton advances transformation that reshapes and/or radically reimagines biased and broken policies, practices, and systems by centering the wisdom of those most impacted, as well as the expertise of providers, and connecting on the ground local and state efforts to federal policy. We center the inherent wisdom of girls and gender-expansive young people impacted by generational chronic adversity, violence, and oppression as core to all of our policy advocacy efforts. We know that building and sustaining collective strength and power with a diverse array of partners led by those most impacted and using an intersectional approach to address the root causes of injustice are critical to building an ecosystem of support that is just, safe, and healing-informed. The following information is a snapshot of Crittenton’s policy advocacy work from 2019 - 2020 unless otherwise specified.

**LEGISLATION**

**FAMILIES FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (2018)**

Successfully advocated for the inclusion of expectant and parenting youth as an eligible population for prevention services and residential care specializing in the needs of pregnant and parenting youth as an exempt category from Qualified Residential Treatment Program requirements. This was a historic acknowledgement of the unique needs of child welfare-involved young parents and their children.

**TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION REAUTHORIZATION ACT (2018)**

Successfully advocated for the addition of the unprecedented requirement for states to report the numbers of expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

**TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT (2018)**

Introduced by Senators Durbin (D-IL), Heitkamp (D-ND), Franken (D-MN), and Representative Danny Davis (D-IL), the Act was the first-ever legislation focused on addressing trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) at the federal level. National Crittenton provided input on the legislation from the beginning stages of drafting and assisted with advocacy efforts. Elements of this legislation were eventually passed into law, including the creation of a federal task force on trauma.

**LEGISLATION PROCESS**

Crittenton has also advised the development, and assisted in advocacy related to, the following proposals:

**RISE FROM TRAUMA ACT**

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL) AND MURKOWSKI (R-AK)

Bipartisan legislation to increase support for children who have been exposed to ACEs and trauma.

**PUSHOUT ACT**

REP. PRESSLEY (D-MA)

Informed by Dr. Monique Morris’ work on school pushout among Black and brown girls, the bill acknowledges the harmful ways in which Black and brown girls are criminalized and over-policed at school, and aims to disrupt the school-to-confinement pathway.

**STRONG CHILDREN ACT**

REP. PRESSLEY (NOT YET INTRODUCED)

This act would create a federal grant program to test new approaches to improve outcomes for children in communities with high prevalence of childhood trauma and ACEs.
In the spring and summer 2019, National Crittenton advised the development of the first-ever Congressional hearing on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma. A Florence Crittenton alum from Helena, MT, testified on her personal experience as a survivor of ACEs and trauma as a child. Here is the briefing announcement and recording.

In February 2020, National Crittenton President, Jeannette Pai-Espinosa, was invited to join Representatives Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), and Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Dr. Monique Morris to speak at a press briefing to mark the introduction of the Ending Punitive, Unfair, School-based Harm that is Overt and Unresponsive to Trauma (PUSHOUT) Act, described above.

In February 2020, National Crittenton President, Jeannette Pai-Espinosa, was invited to speak at a members-only briefing for the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth on the mental health of girls in foster care and marginalized girls and young women. Among the Members of Congress in attendance were Representatives Karen Bass (D-CA), Don Bacon (R-NE), Judy Chu (D-CA), and Bobby Scott (D-VA).

National Crittenton has hosted a number of Congressional briefings focused on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). For example, in 2017, National Crittenton hosted a Congressional briefing entitled “Supporting Girls to Heal and Thrive: A Cross-Systems Approach.” The event highlighted the intersections and connections between public systems serving girls and the need for a multi-system policy approach.

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AMICUS BRIEFS, SIGN ON LETTERS, BILL ENDORSEMENTS, FEDERAL REGULATIONS

National Crittenton annually signs on to Amicus Briefs and sign-on letters, endorses Federal legislation, and provides comments on the implementation of Federal regulations on a broad range of issues related to justice for girls and gender-expansive young people, their families, and communities. In 2019-2020 (to date) Crittenton has done so more than 50 times. Examples of each are found below:


**Sign on Letters:** Foster Opportunity Earned Income Tax Credit and The DREAM Act of 2019, Emergency Family Stabilization Fund to assist families at-risk or currently experiencing homelessness.

**Bill Endorsements:** H.R. 5053, Justice for Juveniles Act, Equality Act and Child Welfare Emergency Assistance Act, Mothers and Newborn Act

**Federal Regulations:** Changes to Title IX regulations, HUD Fair Housing Rule, Rule regarding nondiscrimination provisions in federal law

COALITIONS AND ALLIANCES

National Crittenton is a co-founder of the Girls @ the Margin National Alliance – an affiliation of local, state, and national organizations and advocates working across sectors and systems to address root causes of the complex issues confronting marginalized girls and young women – and is in the process of launching the Justice for Young Families Network – a national coalition of young parent advisors who will inform policy and advocacy efforts. Additionally, National Crittenton is an active member of multiple specific and cross sector coalitions, networks, and strategic alliances, ranging in focus from juvenile justice reform and civil rights to trauma-informed supports in education. Some examples are listed below:

- ACEs Connection Network
- Act4 Juvenile Justice
- Ascend Network/Aspen Institute
- Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice
- Child Welfare and Mental Health Coalition
- Coalition for Trauma and ACEs Policy
- Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Network
- Youth First Initiative Partners