



CONTACT:

KATY OTTO (JUVENILE LAW CENTER)

OFFICE: 215-625-0551 ext. 128 CELL: 240-478-9387 EMAIL: kotto@jlc.org

**Juvenile Law Center, Leading Child Welfare Public Interest Law Firm,
Opposes Graham-Cassidy**

Organization cites the bill's harmful impact on youth in foster care and their families

Philadelphia, PA (September 21, 2017) – Juvenile Law Center, the nation's oldest public interest law firm focused on children's rights, today denounces the Graham-Cassidy healthcare bill in the U.S. Senate as uniquely harmful and damaging for young people in the child welfare system.

"Time and again, youth in foster care are not considered and prioritized when it comes to the development of public policy," said Susan Mangold, Executive Director of Juvenile Law Center. "Simply put, this legislation would be devastating for children in foster care. These are the children covered by Medicaid, and Graham-Cassidy, like other recent repeal and replace efforts, slashes Medicaid coverage through block grants and per capita capped spending. We urge every Senator to oppose this bill and call on the public to stand up for youth in foster care who depend on Medicaid for vital health coverage."

The bill, slated to come to the floor next week, does not only harm children already in foster care. Loss of coverage to poor families means increased numbers of youth coming into the child welfare system and a decrease in those able to return home. Medicaid for adults and expansion of coverage to poor adults has greatly improved both the capacity of families to care for their kids and the capacity of child welfare agencies to serve families. The need for addiction and mental health services for these parents is growing in many states, as the opioid crisis continues. Depriving adults of care has catastrophic consequences, often felt most painfully by their children.

"Dismantling Medicaid will drive more youth into foster care and will not create a savings in improved health outcomes," Mangold said. "Caps and block grants force states to ration care. If the need exceeds the cap, the cost will fall on the state or locality – the majority of which will not have adequate funds. What this means in practice is impossible choices will need to be made – and kids stand to pay the price."

Juvenile Law Center welcomes questions about the bill's impact on youth in the child welfare system and will continue to our strong advocacy for our nation's most vulnerable children.

Juvenile Law Center is the oldest non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the nation. Widely published and internationally recognized as thought leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center's impact on the development of law and policy on behalf of children is substantial. Juvenile Law Center uses an array of legal strategies and policy advocacy to promote fairness, prevent harm, ensure access to appropriate services, and create opportunities for success for youth in the foster care and justice systems. For more information about Juvenile Law Center's work, visit www.JLC.org.

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