

**Crapo Statement at Hearing on Child Welfare**  
*May 22, 2024*

**Washington, D.C.**--U.S. Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) delivered the following remarks at a hearing entitled “The Family First Prevention Services Act: Successes, Roadblocks, and Opportunities for Improvement.”

*As prepared for delivery:*

“The child welfare system is a critical component of the social safety net, aimed at ensuring children are able to thrive in safe, stable environments.

“After years of bipartisan, collaborative work between this Committee and the child welfare community, the Family First Prevention Services Act was enacted in 2018 to deliver on our shared goals of keeping families together and promoting high-quality foster care placements.

“The structural reforms in Family First allow states to direct their federal child welfare dollars to evidence-based prevention services, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment, family counseling and parent education.

“These front-end interventions recognize that strengthening families can often allow children to remain safely in their homes.

“When foster care is necessary for a child’s safety, the law prioritizes investments to place children with family members or neighbors who can provide a loving, more stable atmosphere.

“Bolstering the efforts of this Committee, the Administration recently took the essential step of finalizing a regulation that makes it easier for family members to become licensed foster parents. By reducing bureaucratic barriers, more children will have the opportunity to live with trusted caregivers.

“Today’s hearing provides an opportunity not only to celebrate the law’s success, but also to reflect on areas for continued improvement.

“The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, known as “the Clearinghouse”, was established in Family First to ensure federal funds are directed to proven, preventive programs.

“However, despite bipartisan efforts in Congress to increase the number of evidence-based models certified by the Clearinghouse, states continue to have limited options in certain categories, and rural areas struggle to implement one-size-fits-all models in their communities.

“The Chairman and I have encouraged the Administration to expedite the Clearinghouse review process so that states have a variety of community-based services to offer as part of a comprehensive continuum of care.

“Unfortunately, some foster youth experience complex behavioral health needs that require placement in a setting that can provide them with more intensive services. In these circumstances, states need to be able to rely on Qualified Residential Treatment Programs, which were established by Family First as a high-quality, trauma-informed treatment option to address the clinical needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders.

“We owe it to our most vulnerable children and families to continue to build on our bipartisan work. This will require us to arm states with innovative options for targeted interventions that support families, promote kinship care, ease pathways to adoption and rely on safe treatment centers when vital for a child’s well-being.

“I look forward to learning more from our witnesses about opportunities to continue to strengthen the child welfare system.

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman.”