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September 13, 2013

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The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
104 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Secretary**

Janet I. Benton

Dear Senator Hatch:

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The Children's Village enthusiastically supports the goals of your proposed legislation, the Improving Outcomes for Youth at Risk for Sex Trafficking Act of 2013. We currently work with hundreds of youth each year who have been the victims of sex trafficking or are at risk of becoming victims, and we support legislation that will help to protect these vulnerable children.

We also welcome the emphasis on family-based care for these young children.

Founded in 1851, The Children's Village is one of the oldest and largest providers of family-focused residential services. While we take great pride in our residential expertise, evidence-based clinical approaches and treatment efficacy, we are vocal proponents of short-term residential care for all children, especially children younger than 13 years of age. Specifically, the vast majority of young children can and should be served through preventive services and specially trained foster families, and they should never enter residential care. In those instances where safety or treatment concerns necessitate residential care for a child over the age of 13, twelve months in residential treatment should be adequate for ninety-eight percent of these children.

Children succeed when in, and with, family and residential treatment can never replicate the belonging of a family. We believe that one stable, appropriate adult relationship is the key to any child's success. For young children, in those instances when out-of-community placement is needed, the solution is proven short-term residential stabilization and expedient step-down to a family. We must continue our investments in non-residential, family-based services for young children. Targeted investments made in family foster care, community-based services and foster parent reimbursement will allow us to reach the goals proposed in this legislation.

At The Children's Village, we attempt to provide many of the services and certifications that this bill mandates. For example, we screen all foster children for signs of their having been victims of sex trafficking or other negative activities. We screen foster parents and provide substantial training in how to

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Jeremy C. Kohomban, Ph.D.

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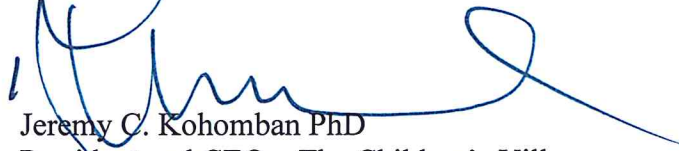
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identify and support youth at risk of sex trafficking. We have an aggressive policy of family finding for all youth who have an APPLA designation. And we provide copies of birth certificates and other documents for youth leaving our care. However, much of this activity is inadequately funded and must be added to already overworked social workers. We are delighted that this bill recognizes the importance of these supports and recommends that funding be provided to ensure that organizations have the resources to respond appropriately.

We thank you for your leadership in protecting our children and youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy C. Kohomban', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jeremy C. Kohomban PhD  
President and CEO – The Children’s Village  
President – Harlem Dowling