



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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June 24 2013

Governor Scott Walker
Hand Delivered

Dear Governor Walker,

As Wisconsin's leading independent child advocacy organization, we encourage you to make the following vetoes to the 2013-15 state budget bill currently awaiting your signature. Both of these items are matters of policy with no significant fiscal impact. We hope you will agree that they are deserving of further consideration, and will take this opportunity to remove them from the budget so that the best possible decision can be made.

Assistance for people seeking health insurance -- We urge you to veto the portion of the budget bill relating to state regulation of health insurance market navigators and other enrollment assistors, or at least to limit the scope of that change. The change that is currently in the bill is likely to prevent many health care organizations that already provide some of those types of assistance to the uninsured from continuing to do so. The changes to BadgerCare that you championed will require shifting more than 90,000 adults from BadgerCare into the new, subsidized health insurance Marketplace. This enrollment challenge will require a comprehensive effort that relies heavily on the ability of entities in Wisconsin that already provide enrollment assistance to continue their great work. We are concerned that the additional budget language relating to licensing and regulation of state navigators and other enrollment assistors will make it difficult and potentially impossible for partners to continue providing consumer assistance. The federal government is already setting up training standards and consumer protections associated with the federally-facilitated marketplace. Any additional barriers Wisconsin creates to enrollment could make this process even more difficult. Vetoing this portion of the budget bill will provide an opportunity outside of the budget process to develop regulations and, if necessary, statutory changes that have been more carefully vetted and don't have the unintended consequence of limiting the consumer assistance that will be so vital to making the new health insurance Marketplace a success.

Length of time a youth can be held in local juvenile detention -- We also urge you to veto the budget provision extending the time a youth can be held in a local juvenile detention facility from 180 days to 365 days. Other than Racine County, only recently have a number of other counties started operating 180-day programs in facilities originally designed for short-term placements. In 2012 the average length of stay for facilities was just over seven days. Providing the kind of assessment, treatment, and educational programming needed for a 180-day program is significantly different than what is needed for a week. Extending it even further to 365 days

with no discussion or debate about the pros and cons of such a plan places youth at risk. Developing local or even regional alternatives to placement at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake School for some youth may be a step forward, but absent any best practice standards or oversight related to the programming provided, the potential to do more harm than good is significant. A veto would leave in place the current statute permitting 180-day placements and provide sufficient time to evaluate the existing programs and develop guidelines for future consideration for this type of extended programming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" and the last name "Taylor" clearly distinguishable.

Ken Taylor
Executive Director