

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV)
Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)

Quotes in Support from Key Stakeholders

The Emergency Family Stabilization Act:

Serving Homeless Children, Youth and Families in Light of COVID-19 in the 117th Congress

“Catholic Social Services has been at the front lines providing services throughout the pandemic through our shelters, case management, and food pantry. We have seen firsthand how great the need is for our entire community, especially children and families. The Emergency Family Stabilization Act will provide funding to service agencies working hard to support struggling families. This legislation will help put a stop to the beginnings of generational homelessness in a time when more families than ever are on the brink of losing housing. Childhood homelessness is a trauma that should be prevented at all costs, and we believe the Emergency Family Stabilization Act can help prevent this trauma - a trauma that no child or person should ever have to experience,” **said Lisa DH Aquino, CEO of Catholic Social Services Alaska.**

Alaska’s children and families are struggle daily. An average of nearly 18% of Alaskan adults living with children had little or no confidence in their ability to pay their next rent or mortgage payment on time and an average of 13% often did not have enough food to eat in the past week. The Emergency Family Stabilization Act can help address the unprecedented need for access to social services families require to get them through this increasingly difficult time. We thank Senator Murkowski and her staff for recognizing that COVID-19 threatens to widen the margins in which Alaskan children and families were already living in prior to this pandemic. With the help of the EFSA, our community-based organizations can continue meeting the needs of Alaska's youth and families, and long-term ensure they thrive," **said Trevor Storrs, President and CEO of Alaska's Children's Trust.**

“The Emergency Family Stabilization Act (EFSA) fills a gap in COVID-19 relief by providing immediate, direct, and comprehensive assistance to children, youth, and families who experience homelessness, but who are largely outside of the formal shelter system due to lack of capacity, fear, and bureaucratic hurdles. These families and youth are forced to move frequently from one crowded situation to another, putting them at greatest risk for transmission and infection -- as well as predation and other harm. By providing resources through the most trusted organic entry points - community-based organizations, early childhood programs, and schools -- we can stabilize vulnerable children and youth, and prevent future generations from experiencing the trauma and violence of homelessness,” **said Barbara Duffield, Executive Director, SchoolHouse Connection.**

"Explicitly targeting resources to children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness is the only way to ensure they are not forgotten during this pandemic. Our children and youth have urgent education, service and housing needs and are at great risk of being trafficked for sex, labor, or both," **said Darla Bardine, Executive Director, National Network for Youth.**

"One of the most powerful tools available to fight human trafficking is a safe place to sleep. Today, there are fewer supports and services than ever while more children, youth and families are struggling with housing insecurity. This legislation is vital to ensuring that the COVID-19 pandemic does not become an epidemic of sex and labor trafficking," **said Catherine Chen, CEO of Polaris.**

"The Emergency Family Stabilization Act takes a positive step forward in reaffirming its commitment to tribal sovereignty with the important inclusion of a tribal set aside. Homelessness in AI/AN communities while prevalent is oftentimes less visible than in other communities because homelessness primarily takes the form of housing shortages, substandard housing, and over-crowded living conditions. Unfortunately, because of this invisibility, tribes often do not receive equitable federal funds to address homelessness. As an organization focused on ending gender based violence in tribal communities, NIWRC recognizes that homelessness in AI/AN communities is often deeply connected to domestic violence: victims often lack access to flexible funding to assist with acquiring safe, secure shelter for their families. We applaud Senator Murkowski and Senator Manchin for reaffirming the trust responsibility the federal government has to Indian Tribes by including the tribal set aside in the EFSA," **said Lucy Simpson, Executive Director , National Indigenous Women's Resource Center.**

"More than 1,000 Community Action Agencies provide frontline assistance to low-income families and seniors in rural and urban communities alike. Since the pandemic and consequential lockdown, these locally-controlled community organizations have seen an exponential need for helping families meet basic needs. Stabilizing children, youth and families as soon as possible is a crucial first step in setting each child up for a healthy, safe childhood during this turbulent time," **said David Bradley, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Foundation.**