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*****PRESS RELEASE *****

Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Holds Public Meeting in Detroit, Michigan; Representatives Dave Camp and Sandy Levin Speak on Issue

Detroit, MI - The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) held a public meeting today in Plymouth, Michigan, just outside of Detroit, to hear from local, state, and federal stakeholders on issues related to identifying, preventing, and reducing child abuse fatalities. CECANF was established by Public Law 112-275 (112th Congress), the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012, to develop a national strategy and recommendations for reducing fatalities across the country resulting from child abuse and neglect. Representatives Dave Camp and Sandy Levin, who spoke at the meeting, were coauthors of the Protect Our Kids Act.

During the meeting, Commission members heard from a broad range of policy, legislative, advocacy, law enforcement, judicial, tribal, health and academic leaders on the issue. The focus of presentations included information and insight related to federal policy, research, and practice associated with child abuse and neglect fatalities, with a practice focus on Michigan, which has undergone a number of reforms over the past five years to improve its data collection and prevention and response.

“Far too many children die each year from abuse and neglect, and we must do more to prevent these tragedies,” commented Chairman Dave Camp of the House Ways and Means Committee. “That’s why I worked with Republicans and Democrats in Congress to create the Commission that met here today to review Michigan’s work on this issue. I’m pleased that they met with so many outstanding Michigan leaders and heard about their work both to understand why these fatalities occur as well as how to protect kids at risk of being harmed. I look forward to the Commission’s continued work with Michigan and other states, and I hope that by working together we will soon be able to take an important step forward to prevent the tragic deaths of so many of our nation’s children.”

“Sixteen hundred children were reported to have died nationwide from abuse and neglect in 2012, and that number likely underestimates the true scope of this heart-wrenching problem,” noted Representative Sandy Levin, who spoke at the meeting. “With the help and advice from those working hard to protect children here in Michigan and around the nation, this Commission can give Congress a roadmap for how we can stop this tragic loss of life.”

“We continued to hear from local and national stakeholders on the issue of how local, state and federal agencies can secure more accurate and reliable data on the number of child deaths that occur due to abuse and neglect,” noted CECANF Chairman Dr. David Sanders. “Understanding the data and gaining a more accurate count will be an important first step to determining how these tragedies can be avoided in the future and informing practice and policy at the state and federal level.”

“Saving children’s lives is at the heart of what we are doing at the local and national level. I commend the Commission for undertaking this important work and trust that what we are doing in Michigan will advance their charge,” said Maura Corrigan, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services. “Good data is important but effective, stable leadership is essential if we are going to succeed in preventing abuse and neglect deaths of children.”

The commission is composed of 12 members, six appointed by the president and six appointed by Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate. Members will take a broad, multidisciplinary approach to studying and making recommendations about the following key issues:

- The use and effectiveness of federally funded child protective and child welfare services
- Best practices for and barriers to preventing child abuse and neglect fatalities
- The effectiveness of federal, state, and local data collection systems, and how to improve them
- Risk factors for child maltreatment
- How to prioritize prevention services for families with the greatest needs

The legislation mandates that the commission submit a report to the president and Congress on these issues within two years (with the potential to extend the deadline by an additional year). The report will detail specific recommendations for strategies to better track and eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities.

The next two public meetings will be held in Denver, CO on September 22-23, 2014 and Burlington, VT on October 23-24, 2014. Members of the general public and the media are invited to attend the meetings, either in person or via teleconference. For more information on CECANF and upcoming meetings, visit our website at <http://eliminatechildabusefatalities.sites.usa.gov>.

About The Commission

The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities is a federal agency established by legislation to study and make recommendations on eliminating child abuse and neglect fatalities. The Commission was formed as a result of the “Protect Our Kids Act” and is made up of six Presidential appointees and six Congressional appointees.

Media Notes: To request an interview with a member of the Commission or request more information about the Commission, please contact Jennifer Devlin at 703-876-1714 or Jennifer.devlin@CECANF.usa.gov.