

Talking Points for Commissioner Ernie Allen
Senate Press Event
“The Child Safety, Care, & Education Continuity Act”
Thursday, December 17, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. EST
Capital Visitors Center - United States Capital, room SVC 208
Washington, DC

- Express regrets from Mark Shriver, Chairperson of the National Commission on Children and Disasters for being unable to attend.
- Extend gratitude from Commission to Senators Mary Landrieu and Lamar Alexander for their leadership on introducing this important bill.
- Why is it important?

The number of annual Presidential disaster declarations has more than doubled from an average of 24 per year in the 1980's to 56 per year this decade.

25% of our population are children 18 years and younger---74 million citizens

Each week, 12 million children under the age of 5 attend day care but according to Save the Children, only 7 states have basic disaster preparedness standards

Children are not simply “small adults” They have unique needs.

Disasters are especially disruptive to children, especially in terms of their health, mental health, education and socialization needs. A sense of “routine” must be re-established quickly in order for children to recover.

The Child Safety, Care, & Continuity Act addresses major gaps and shortfalls which were identified by the National Commission on Children and Disasters in the areas of mental health counseling, access to child care, emergency planning for child care providers, and issues surrounding children's unique medical and mental health needs.

- The Commission supports the bill because it will remedy the benign neglect of children's needs following a disaster.
- We call upon Congress and the President to act swiftly on its passage and signature into law.
- All Americans---especially our children---deserve no less than a disaster recovery system that is responsive to their needs.