

**Hearing on Celebrating Fathers and Families:
Federal Support for Responsible Fatherhood**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKER AND FAMILY SUPPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Hearing on Celebrating Fathers and Families: Federal Support for Responsible Fatherhood

U.S. House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support,
Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, D.C

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Witness Statement

Halbert Sullivan

Founder and CEO, Fathers' Support Center
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Samuel Gonzales

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Ryan Howard

Executive Director, Owens Valley Career Development Center
Witness Statement

William C. Bell

President and CEO, Casey Family Programs
Witness Statement



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
CHAIRMAN RICHARD E. NEAL

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKER AND FAMILY SUPPORT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 2019
No. WF-2

CONTACT: (202) 225-9263

Chairman Davis Announces a Subcommittee Hearing on Celebrating Fathers and Families: Federal Support for Responsible Fatherhood

House Ways and Means Worker and Family Support Subcommittee Chairman Danny K. Davis announced today that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing, titled “Celebrating Fathers and Families: Federal Support for Responsible Fatherhood” on Tuesday, June 11th, at 2 PM in room 2020 Rayburn House Office Building.

In view of the limited time available to hear witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit written comments for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to make a submission, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. Please indicate in the subject line of your e-mail the title of the hearing for which you wish to submit testimony. ATTACH your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, **by the close of business on Tuesday, June 25, 2019**. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but reserves the right to format it according to guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

All submissions and supplementary materials must be submitted in a single document via email, provided in Word format and must not exceed a total of 10 pages. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.

All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. The name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness must be included in the body of the email. Please exclude any personal identifiable information in the attached submission.

Failure to follow the formatting requirements may result in the exclusion of a submission. All submissions for the record are final.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require special accommodations, please call (202) 225-3625 in advance of the event (four business days' notice is requested). Questions regarding special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>

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RPTR BRYANT

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CELEBRATING FATHERS AND FAMILIES: FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIBLE
FATHERHOOD

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support,

Committee on Ways and Means,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:24 p.m., in Room 2020, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Danny Davis [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Chairman Davis. Thank you all for being here. The committee will come to order. I don't see my gavel. The subcommittee will come to order.

Let me thank the ranking member and the members of the subcommittee for joining me today to hold a hearing on fatherhood, an issue that is close to my heart. As Father's Day approaches this Sunday, I am glad to have the opportunity to celebrate fathers and families here by learning about the New Pathways for Fathers and Families Grant Program.

No matter how you cut it, there are a lot of vulnerable children in our society. There are children whose parents do not live together and who have substantially strained relationships. There are children who are parentless, children whose parents struggle with mental health challenges and addiction, children who lost one or both of their parents to incarceration, children whose parents are no longer alive, and, of course, children who cannot live safely with their parents.

These children had no say in the difficulties in their families. We must all do everything that we can to assist these families, because that is what is best for children. Within our subcommittee, we have many programs that can help both parents, but understandably tend to focus a great deal on the role of mothers, such as home visiting and TANF.

We also have within our jurisdiction the Responsible Fatherhood Grants, which recognize and support the critical role fathers play in family well-being. And we recently enacted the bipartisan Family First Prevention Services Act, which provides resources to strengthen parenting, wherever that is needed. Research shows that a supportive and involved father strengthens a child's emotional, physical, intellectual, and behavioral development, even if the father does not live in the same household as his child.

I am pleased to welcome Deputy Warden Duffield from the Sheridan Correctional facility in Illinois as a witness. For about 5 years, I have worked with former Sheridan warden Nikki Robinson, current Warden David Gomez, and the Illinois Department of Corrections to bring substantial busloads of children to see their incarcerated fathers for Father's Day. This program reconnects these individual families and keeps fathers present in their children's lives, even though the fathers are away.

It supports the most fundamental relationship we have between a parent and a child. You see the joy of the children and dads spending time together, playing games, hugging. Also, you see the sadness as the time ends, when the conversations slow, and children ask, Daddy, do you have to go? Can't you stay? Daddy, are you going with us? Can you come home with us? One year we had a father who had got so upset because he thought that his son was not on the bus, only to recognize that he didn't recognize his son since it had been so long since they had last seen each other.

I am grateful to the Sheridan staff for all that they do to make these visits special and meaningful for the children and families. You see, they have to change the visitation room, set it up to be more developmentally friendly to the children. Further, outside visitors cannot bring anything into the prison. So the warden and his staff personally pay for the meals, the decorations, the games and the coloring books, and they volunteer their time to make it special.

On screen right now is a picture from our visit two weekends ago. Now I am going to show a short video from our recent visit.

[Video shown.]

Chairman Davis. We know that well-designed fatherhood programs increase parenting skills, improve relationships between parents and children and between co-parents, and generate positive outcomes for fathers and their children. I want to

work across the aisle to expand these responsible programs, these Responsible Fatherhood programs that help strengthen families and support vulnerable children.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and thank you all for coming, and I am delighted now to recognize the ranking member, Mrs. Walorski, for an opening statement.

[[The statement of Chairman Davis follows:](#)]

Mrs. Walorski. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for holding this important hearing on fatherhood, and happy Father's Day to all of you in this room as you celebrate this weekend.

Thanks for holding this important hearing on fatherhood and for sharing that touching video highlighting your efforts to connect fathers with their children at the Sheridan Correctional facility each Father's Day. And to all of you that are here from Sheridan, I know this is a personal passion project of yours, Mr. Chairman, and I am proud this subcommittee is able to bring additional attention to the important role fathers play in building strong families.

We all want the best for our children, and we know intuitively and through research that when a father is around to provide emotional and financial support, child outcomes improve. When that father is in the home, those outcomes improve further; and when that father is in the home and married, children have the best outcomes.

We also find that there are positives for parents. Marriage brings a greater sense of stability and satisfaction compared to couples who are cohabitating. According to research gathered by AEI scholar Brad Wilcox, the positive outcomes for children run the gamut from improved mental health and academic achievement to reduced levels of crime and teen pregnancy. Children are more likely to excel in school and to avoid delinquency when they grow up with an involved and nurturing father. Children who report a high-quality relationship with their father are less likely to experience depression than those who don't enjoy such a relationship.

One reason dads are sometimes not welcome or active in a child's life is a lack of financial contribution, sometimes resulting in a more adversarial relationship through our child support enforcement system. That is why this subcommittee has been concerned

about the seven million men who went missing from the labor force in the wake of the Great Recession. Many of them are fathers.

But as the economy has improved, so have opportunities for dads. This subcommittee previously heard from Tyrone Ferrens of Baltimore, who participated in Project JumpStart with the Center for Urban Families, a Federal fatherhood grantee. With their help, after 14 arrests, jail time, and court-ordered rehab, he is now a journeyman electrician and homeowner who has rebuilt his entire family.

He talked about how his goal upon exiting prison was to be present in his children's lives. And since Project JumpStart, that is exactly what he has done. His son became the first in the family to attend college; and his daughter, who is now 30, and inspired by his efforts, is going through Project JumpStart to get a second chance at success herself.

I would like to ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, to insert into the record an article from the South Bend Tribune and an article from The Goshen News about two individual fathers in my district who are having a positive impact on their communities.

Chairman Davis. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

[South Bend Tribune](#)

[Goshen News](#)

Mrs. Walorski. Thank you.

Finally, in the hearing room with us today, I am honored to welcome Samuel Gonzales -- and I know, Kayla, you are right there and I didn't get to you fast enough, but thank you for being here with him -- to share your story about what it means to be a dad. Very, very grateful you are here.

A few years ago, I am not sure you would have thought that you would be testifying before a congressional committee, but, with the support of the TRUE Dads program and the It's My Community Initiative and, most importantly, from your wife Kayla, who is in the audience to be with us here today. I am very grateful to both of you.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from Sam and the rest of our amazing panel for the great discussion to follow.

With that, I yield back.

[\[The statement of Mrs. Walorski follows:\]](#)

Chairman Davis. Thank you, Mrs. Walorski.

Without objection, all members' opening statements will be made a part of the record.

We have a very distinguished panel of witnesses here with us today to discuss the important issue of responsible fatherhood. They will help us to understand the most effective ways to support and improve the bond between fathers and their children and how the Federal Government can help.

First, I would like to welcome Nicolette Duffield, the Assistant Warden for Programs at Sheridan Correctional Center in Sheridan, Illinois. I have been proud to partner with Warden Duffield and her colleagues at the Sheridan Correctional Center to help fathers and children spend time together for Father's Day. And they also operate a number of other outstanding programs.

Next is Mr. Halbert Sullivan, founder and CEO of Fathers' Support Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Fathers' Support Center receives funding through the Federal Fatherhood Grant Program and does great things for the men in their community.

Third, Mr. Samuel Gonzales joins us from Oklahoma City, where he is a participant in the TRUE Dads program. TRUE Dads is a model fatherhood grant recipient.

Fourth, we have Mr. Ryan Howard, the executive director of the Owens Valley Community Development Center in Bishop, California. Mr. Howard runs a culturally relevant program for Native American fathers in his area and helps them connect to their children and their heritage.

Finally, we have Dr. William Bell, president and CEO of Casey Family Programs, a national foundation I and many of us have worked with over the years to better support families and reduce the need for foster care. Dr. Bell is accompanied by several foster

youth alumni and parents who have navigated the foster care system and are here in the audience to see our hearing and also visiting with Members of Congress today about opportunities to do better by children and families using new tools in the Family First Prevention Services Act. So I want to welcome and thank all of those parents and youth as well.

Each of your statements will be made a part of the record in its entirety. I would ask that you summarize your testimony in 5 minutes or less. To help you with the time, there is a timing light at your table. When you have 1 minute left, the light will switch from green to yellow and then finally to red when 5 minutes are up.

I am usually generally pretty liberal with the time, but because we know that we are going to have another round of votes and I want to make sure that each one of the witnesses get an opportunity to present before those votes are called, so I am going to ask you to be as prudent in terms of the 5-minute requirement as you will.

So thank you very much.

And, Warden Duffield, will you begin.

**STATEMENT OF NICOLETTE DUFFIELD, ASSISTANT WARDEN OF PROGRAMS, SHERIDAN
CORRECTIONAL CENTER**

Ms. Duffield. Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Davis and Ranking Member Walorski and the members of the subcommittee for holding this hearing.

We here at Sheridan Correctional Center believe in the importance of fathers within the family unit. The building up of men to step up and return to society in a positive male role and embrace the importance of being a good father is paramount.

Myself and staff at Sheridan Correctional Center take the topic seriously and

support the men incarcerated as they work to develop knowledge and skills of navigating the challenges of becoming a dad after being away from their children due to their incarceration and addiction.

Sheridan Correctional Center is the largest national dedicated facility to substance abuse treatment. Sheridan provides addiction treatment and reentry services to approximately 1,650 men daily. We work in partnership with WestCare Foundation to provide a modified therapeutic community model, along with evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, family reunification and anger management services.

Experiences from the Illinois Sheridan Correctional Center therapeutic community demonstrates that clients completing the WestCare treatment program at Sheridan Correctional facility saw a reduction in an approximate of 20 percent as compared to individuals released from other Illinois prisons. We accomplish this low recidivism rate by meeting our clients where they are, treating them with the dignity they deserve, and recognizing the value of human spirit. Our first priority is to provide the highest quality of services possible.

We also believe that we are responsible to the communities in which we live and work. This is why we work hard to focus on helping men and families by offering specialized fatherhood and family training for men.

One such program is our Fatherhood and Family Reunification program. This is a weekend program that is offered on Saturdays for 10 weeks by the WestCare counselors. We are not funded for this program, so staff from both IDOC and WestCare volunteer to work on Saturday mornings to offer the services. Food and supplies are donated by our volunteer services group, often by the dedicated staff who choose to provide these services and who see the results of the programming such as this. Due to the space

issues and funding considerations, we are currently only able to accommodate 24 families. So we have to choose our participants very carefully.

During one of our treatment sessions, a client's mother shared a powerful personal story. Each Saturday as she drove over to the facility for treatment group, she would pass by a house for sale. And she liked that house; it felt wonderful. She wondered if she could afford that home. She began looking into the possibility. And during the 10-week session, after receiving her program completion certificate, she elaborated on the story about the house. With tears flowing, she shared that she had been in a long-term physically and emotionally abusive relationship before beginning the family reunification. She stated that with each session, she became stronger and more confident that she could leave the abusive relationship. She ended the story by thanking each member and letting them know that she had purchased the house to start her new life.

Many members have expressed their heartfelt thanks for allowing them to participate in the Family Reunification program. In addition to the Family Reunification program, we host Congressman Davis Father's Day program each year. 5 years ago Chief Nikki Robinson, former warden at Sheridan, and Congressman Davis worked together to start this program. Warden Gomez and his staff have carried on the legacy.

Every year in June at Sheridan, the fathers' families come to visit, play, and have lunch with their dads. The program is a much more relaxed open visiting setting than normal. The men and their children can get up, move about, get food, play games and color or just sit and talk. For the past 5 years, Chief Robinson and Warden Gomez and I have served alongside the community partner and stakeholders with the Congressman Danny Davis Visit to Dad, a free Father's Day bus trip.

I wanted to elaborate on a story. As illustrated from this Father's Day program, I

would like to read an impact letter: It was an amazing day. Not only was I able to see my daughter on her birthday, it was the first time I was able to hold her. I would like to thank you guys for making this possible. To be honest, it meant the world to me. I was also able to meet people to help me get a job when I come home. I just lost my child's mother to gun violence and I have been going through so much. That only one day helped brighten my current situation. I could take all day saying how much I lost since being in jail this time, but you guys really helped me just for a little moment by letting me see my child and hold her for the first time ever, and it was her first birthday. I am such a changed man now and how much this means to me. I couldn't do it with the mother of my son who had died just a week ago.

In closing, I would like to state that we believe that it is not only recidivism rates that can be positively affected by a program like this, but that our work with fathers and families can break the intergenerational cycles of addiction, abuse, trauma and criminal justice involvement as well. It is our hope that this work will result in less crime, much less drug use, higher quality of life overall for the residents of the State of Illinois.

Thank you for your time.

[\[The statement of Ms. Duffield follows:\]](#)

Chairman Davis. Thank you, Warden Duffield, and we appreciate your testimony.

Mr. Sullivan, would you proceed.

STATEMENT OF HALBERT SULLIVAN, FOUNDER AND CEO, FATHERS' SUPPORT CENTER

Mr. Sullivan. Good afternoon. Thank you, Congressman Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Walorski, and members of the subcommittee, for holding this hearing.

Fatherhood is an important issue for families all over the country. I have been involved in helping fathers and families succeed for over 21 years. Currently, I am the founder and CEO of the Fathers' Support Center of St. Louis. The Fathers' Support Center has been providing father-centered services for over 21 years, during which time we have reached over 16,000 fathers and impacted over 40,000 children. Our agency is rooted in the community. We receive referrals from family court, probation and parole, city and county justice centers, and child support enforcement as well as we work with other agencies to provide services to families.

FSC is a current recipient of the HHS New Pathways for Fathers and Families Grant. We provide services to over 500 fathers annually. Our current grant is at \$2 million annually, which \$400,000 goes toward evaluation. Annually, we will raise an additional \$500,000 to provide different services that the grant dollars do not cover. We provide programs that take a comprehensive approach to impact the problems faced by children growing up without their dads in their lives.

In 2018, our program return on investment was over \$13 million on a \$3.6 million investment. Counted into this program return on investment included in 2018, 183

fathers in our Responsible Fatherhood program gained employment. That equated to \$5.8 million going into our local economy. In 2018, 216 fathers from our reentry program gained employment. That equated to over \$3.8 million going into our local economy and a reduction on recidivism. Our recidivism was down 12 percent.

And in 2018, 120 fathers who had child support orders paid over \$368,000 into the child support system. Since 2016, we have been involved in a pilot project with our State child support system. Come June 30, our program will have paid over a million dollars into the child support system. Fatherhood programs are very important.

Our program is built around teaching responsible behavior. First, we attempt to assist the father in changing the way he thinks about himself and how he thinks about his involvement with his child. For example, one of our clients who has two children, ages 8 and 11, recently made a statement to his facilitator. He said: During my first week in class, Mr. Sullivan asked me why am I in this program, you and your family are small business owners. He stated, I am in this program because I need to be a better father. He further stated, and I am a better father today than I was when I first started this program. That is why I am in your program. The father came to FSC to get assistance with visitation. The child is at the center of what we do, and employment is the most urgent area that we address.

FSC staff work to have fathers find employment by creating personal relationships with employers. Through these relationships, we learn exactly how likely an employer is to hire a person with barriers, because our fathers may have criminal records, no high school diploma and no work history. Each employment staff will have a minimum of 25 prospective employers that they work with.

At Fathers' Support Center, we conduct hiring fairs. A hiring fair is not to be confused with a job fair. Employers are invited only if they are prepared to hire on the

spot, and we have six of those per year.

An investment in Responsible Fatherhood programs is an investment for children, families, and communities. Programs that seek to change the direction of our families and in particular our low-income families should be built to be comprehensive and take a holistic approach and should include providing a therapeutic and trusting environment. To develop trust, our staff is very father-friendly. FSC has hired most of our facilitators from fathers who have been in our program. They were actual clients. The facilitator, teamed with a social worker, a therapist and a job developer, these three staff will be with the client from the beginning to the end.

The educator/facilitator provides the day-to-day curriculum content along with the social worker/therapist. The first activity each morning is a therapeutic circle where the participants are allowed to vent. They are allowed to vent their frustrations with the therapist. The fathers are then given a chance to be heard and not just lectured to.

Parenting skills training, to include activities that can enrich the father-child interaction, is included where appropriate. As you saw with my colleague, the father-child interaction is very important.

Economic stability and job readiness. Employment readiness starts with addressing literacy skills first, GED, and it ends with providing job skills training. Employment placement. That is the relationship skills building, how to interact with the mother of your child.

In building a comprehensive approach, the program needs to include intervention with child support enforcement, provide trauma informed care interventions, assist in obtaining legal visitation and other rights, feature opportunities for father-child bonding activities, which are very important.

Father-child bonding activities, combined with parenting classes, allow for our

staff to observe the father's actual parenting skills in action. An example of father-child bonding activities we promote normally, taking kids to the history museum, the science center, movies. I/we tend to focus on the arts, but we occasionally will receive group tickets to sporting events. Most of our bonding activities take a half day or more. Food is a requirement when you have children at these events for that length of time.

The objective of this activity is to give the father some time with his child and to observe his interaction and parenting skills with his child. One of our last bonding activities, a client expressed his thanks for the opportunity to spend time with his child. This child was 8 years old and the father had not had time with this child for over 2 years. The father learned during this outing what the child's favorite color was. The father came to FSC to get assistance with employment placement.

[\[The statement of Mr. Sullivan follows:\]](#)

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much. Mr. Gonzales.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL GONZALES, PARTICIPANT, TRUE DADS PROGRAM

Mr. Gonzales. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ranking member, and committee members. Sorry, this is my first time.

Today I am here all the way from Oklahoma City to thank you for your investment that you made into the program and also into me and my family. I am honored to have been chosen to share with you the story of how I have grown and changed as a man this past year, as a father, a husband, and someone who works hard to provide for his family.

One of the reasons I have been able to achieve good things for myself, my wife, and our family is because I participated in the program TRUE Dads. It is a fatherhood program paid for by a Responsible Fatherhood Grant from the Office of Family Assistance and the Administration for Children and Families. What is more important to me is that you decided to fund programs like TRUE Dads, mine. As you hear what I have to say, hopefully you will agree that you got your money's worth.

The best way I can help you realize that is for me to share my personal story, letting you see some of my family's struggles and success. My story starts when I was a child. Growing up as the baby of seven, I knew my parents loved us. My father always was on the road, my mother always working or tired, didn't have time for us. They were only able to provide so much in terms of relationship with us kids. I knew that if I were to ever become a husband like I am now, a father, I wanted to do things differently. What I thought about was I didn't know exactly how to do that.

It is difficult for everyone to admit when they are struggling in their relationships,

career, or role as a parent or all three, but I think it is hardest for men, taking responsibility for themselves as fathers, at least that is how I see it. You may know you need help, but it is hard to feel safe enough to let your guard down and trust that you will find support, not judgment.

So when I was first referred to TRUE Dads with Kayla, she is the one that was there with me, I was happy about the idea. I didn't know that there was a place that helps dads learn about parenting and how to have better relationships. I couldn't believe that getting the help I needed would be free, which was important because I didn't have a lot of money to pay for it.

But I was also a bit nervous about signing up for the program. Fortunately, the program On My Shoulders, the class, it got me right away. The things Kayla and I learned in the fatherhood group made it seem like they were talking to us. They just didn't talk at us either. We learned skills to make our relationship stronger and to be great parents, because we practiced them as part of TRUE Dads.

Some programs only focus on part of your life, work, family, or your relationships, but life doesn't work that way for most of us. You have to work on all these things to achieve your goals. That is what I found at TRUE Dads, a place that deals with your whole life.

One of the decisions I made during my time at TRUE Dads program was to marry Kayla, officially becoming a father to her daughter and creating a more secure future for the baby that Kayla and I are now having. Kayla and I now are having a son in August. Previously, I wasn't totally sold on the concept of getting married. I had been enjoying my freedom and the ability to do whatever I pleased. And Kayla's situation was complicated. She had a daughter through a previous relationship that was pretty bad for her. It was pretty complicated for her and her daughter through a previous

relationship that was pretty traumatic for them both. I wasn't sure exactly how to deal with all of that or even how to bond with her daughter, who had already been through so much. But Kayla was special and I wanted to try. Through the information I learned and the skills taught through TRUE Dads, I was able to deepen my connection with both Kayla and her daughter, helping them both feel safe, and I now consider her my daughter, no matter what her birth certificate says.

With my wife, daughter, and a new baby on the way, I am loving life right now. Of course, there are still challenges. While I came to TRUE Dads primarily for the relationship and services, I realized there were so much also great employment services, available services I would end up needing. My career in construction requires a lot of ongoing education certificates; and not having one of these certificates, unfortunately, led me to lose my job when times got tight for the company.

TRUE Dads were there for me when I didn't have work. They let me use their job resource center, helped me with writing my resume and preparing job applications, were available to answer questions, coached me into a new job that I start tomorrow.

I have a strong drive to provide for my family even if that means lower level work or personally going without. But it has also been great to learn about career pathways and have the support I need to get additional credentials to help me achieve professionally through TRUE Dads. I have been able to get new certifications by participating in trainings that have put me in a better position for career achievement to make more money to support my family.

Kayla and I still have our ups and downs like everyone else. We are not perfect. We sometimes forget to put into practice what we have learned, but we try to use the skills on a daily basis at home, with our friends and coworkers as well.

Through my participation in TRUE Dads programs, I have greater knowledge of

how to communicate negative conflicts and more consistently demonstrate my love for my wife and family. I also have more confidence and greater control over my emotions. Apparently not. TRUE Dads' motto is "win at parenting, work and relationships, so kids win at life." We all want great jobs, positive interpersonal relationships, and strong marriages. And I am glad that TRUE Dads understands that in doing well as parents and partners, it also means that we are doing right by our children and their future.

I started TRUE Dads as a single guy doing what he wanted -- doing what I wanted, and I am finishing the program as a happily married man with a prospect of a good job and children that I love very much. I am confident in my ability to be a great father, and I am hopeful that I will be able to provide for my family's needs for the years to come.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you, and I hope it plays a big part in helping people understand the importance of building their skills as fathers like I have to provide for my children and my son that will come in August. Thank you.

[\[The statement of Mr. Gonzales follows:\]](#)

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

And, Mr. Howard, you may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF RYAN HOWARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OWENS VALLEY CAREER
DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

Mr. Howard. Good afternoon, Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Walorski, and members of the committee. I am Ryan Howard and I serve as the executive director of the Owens Valley Career Development Center, also known as OVCDC.

OVCDC is a Native American Tribal organization that provides education, training, and family support through a number of Federal programs, including Early Head Start, Native American Career and Technical Education, which is a Department of Ed grant, and the Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program.

We are headquartered on the Bishop Paiute Indian Reservation in Bishop, California, and our programs serve 12 Tribes across central and eastern and California.

At OVCDC, we see the significant impact that strong fathers contribute to family success every day, so we commend the committee for looking into this very important issue. We developed our own specific fatherhood program based on an unmet need. We realized several years ago that many of our services were tailored to our female TANF participants. This made some sense, given the demographics of our caseload, which is overwhelmingly female. However, we were missing engagement with our fathers receiving TANF services. Our services also broadly excluded noncustodial fathers, even though research shows that noncustodial fathers have a significant impact, both emotionally and financially, when actively engaged with their children. We made a

programmatic decision to target some specific services to our fathers by providing programming designed for them and exclusively funded through our Tribal TANF program.

The authorizing TANF statute includes four broad purposes. One of these is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. Our experience indicates that an actively involved father is a key component to a strong family and, thus, we choose to allocate a significant portion of our resources towards this purpose.

The foundation of our program is that a child's most important educators are his or her parents. It is our long-term vision that by engaging fathers in understanding and practicing responsible fatherhood, we will produce more positive outcomes for the children.

OVCDL encourages all fathers who qualify for TANF to participate, and that includes noncustodial and nonbiological fathers, as they play a key role in developing strong, stable, and successful families.

The curriculum for our program was developed by the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association, and it is titled Fatherhood is Sacred. The course is designed for 12 two-hour sessions and teaches participants to connect with their Native American heritage as they become actively involved in the lives of their families. Family is truly at the heart of Native American culture; and because of that, there is no duty or role in life that is more important than fatherhood.

The curriculum is designed to teach five core components: Those include the Creator, choice, being teachable, wisdom, and service. While the curriculum provides a solid base of instructions, it is easily adaptable and exportable to different Tribal communities by allowing for the incorporation of local Tribal beliefs and teachings. The course is a mixture of interactive discussion and lecture.

One area I would like to highlight is the service component. We try to demonstrate that by engaging in service with one's family, it is not only just personally rewarding, but also strengthens the family and community bonds as well as improving the world around you. To this end, our fatherhood groups have worked with local Forest Service offices to repair fencing at a campground and another group built wooden benches at a Tribal ceremonial ground. These group service activities strengthen the concept of service learning by giving our fatherhood groups a collective project and purpose.

While we believe our program is incredibly effective, a lack of resources does limit our ability to reach more families. We have received requests for this course from local law enforcement agencies, from local prisons, and also child welfare agencies, but our TANF grant is insufficient to meet the needs of these communities with whom engagement would clearly be effective and also beneficial.

To expand our program, we would need to apply for specific fatherhood grants, but we lack the grant writing expertise and would be forced to compete with States and other national nonprofits for this competitive funding. Even though statewide programs may be effective, the reality is that they often do not reach into Tribal communities, where the help is sometimes needed the most.

Additional resources would also help us better evaluate the long-term effectiveness of our program. OVCD does use a portion of our funding to administer a pre and post participation survey, and we also collect written testimonials. Through these surveys, our fathers indicate they have developed the ability to better control anger, have become more involved with their children through play and other activities, and have started to talk with their children more on a regular basis. They also show more positive behavior towards the child's other parent.

Anecdotally, we believe these programs have resulted in reduced recidivism, but we lack the resources to truly prove that. We have not been able to conduct more intense or long-term assessments, which would provide valuable information to show the true effectiveness of the programming and help make future grant applications more competitive.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I thank you for your continued support of fatherhood programs like ours. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[\[The statement of Mr. Howard follows:\]](#)

Chairman Davis. Thank you, Mr. Howard.

And Dr. Bell, will you proceed.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM C. BELL, PRESIDENT AND CEO, CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Mr. Bell. Good afternoon, Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Walorski, and members of the committee.

For the past 53 years, Casey Family Programs has been analyzing, developing, and informing best practices in child welfare and child well-being. We partner with child welfare agencies, community residents, business leaders, government leaders, Tribal Nations, nonprofit organizations and philanthropic organizations in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Casey works to support practices and policies that increase the safety and success of children and strengthen the resilience of families.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to talk about the critical role that fathers play in the lives of their children. Casey Family Programs has learned from research and from providing direct services for over five decades that most children grow up to have better outcomes in life when they are nurtured and cared for by their own families. We have also learned that fathers and their involvement are critical in achieving this result. Fathers have a significant role to play in children's physical, emotional, and social development, and they are essential partners in the prevention of child abuse, neglect, and foster care placements.

We know from our work, from research, but, most importantly, from talking with youth directly, that higher education achievement, higher self-esteem, decreased

acting-out behavior, and higher levels of self-control in children have all been correlated to having a highly engaged and involved father.

Unfortunately, child-serving systems often discount the importance of a father's involvement in the lives of their children. Too often many government systems focus on payment of child support as the noncustodial father's only critical responsibility and method of connection to the support and rearing of their children.

While financial support is important, data shows that outcomes for children improve not by virtue of financial support alone, but also through high-quality relationships and safe and healthy interactions between fathers and children. Even though initiatives and investments designed to build protective factors among children have grown, father-specific programs and resources have continued to be developed at the margins, if at all. While there are a number of promising fatherhood engagement programs that currently exist -- and you have heard about a number of them here today -- we believe that by using the tools provided by Congress in the Family First Prevention Services Act, States and Tribes have an incredible opportunity to expand and develop more of the types of programs that strengthen the connection between fathers and their children.

I want to thank the committee for your leadership and for focusing attention on the opportunities before us, to truly transform how we serve and support families by engaging fathers and the paternal extended family. However, if we are to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by Family First, especially for fathers who do not reside in the home with their children, we must expand the way that we conceptualize the programs that we design. Many programs, such as licensed residential family-based treatment facilities that address the needs of substance-affected parents without requiring their children to be removed are designed only for mothers and their children

and not fathers.

Approximately 1 month ago, Casey Family Programs convened 17 States who are eager and interested in accessing the prevention dollars provided in Family First. There is great enthusiasm and energy about Family First in Tribes and in States across this Nation. However, despite this enthusiasm, States and Tribes have voiced concerns about barriers that they see to the successful and timely implementation of Family First. We continue to hear frustration expressed with the timeliness, communication, and dissemination of information regarding the evidence-based programs requirement and the establishment of the Family First clearinghouse.

For States to access the Federal prevention funds, the law requires that they spend at least 50 percent of those funds on well-supported programs. States are concerned that the number of program options included in the federally created evidence-based clearinghouse may be too limited. In addition, specialized programs like fatherhood programs that have demonstrated results but may not yet be categorized as well-supported programs -- I think that is what my colleague was just speaking to -- may be limited in use due to this requirement.

The systems transformation we seek will take time and resources while States and Tribes continue the critical work of working with children and families. States and Tribes need our help and they need your help and support, because they are all in varying places of development, facing varying challenges around workforce, training, the availability of quality service providers, and the resources needed to build their capacity.

Casey Family Programs commends this committee for bringing attention to the critical importance of engaging fathers in the lives of children, especially children involved in the child welfare system. There is much more that I have to say but, in the interest of time, there is plenty in the written testimony that I have provided, and I would be happy

to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

[[The statement of Mr. Bell follows:](#)]

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much, Dr. Bell.

We will now proceed to our additional 5 minutes of questioning, and I will begin.

Again, thank you all for your testimonies and for sharing with us.

Assistant Warden Duffield, could you make sure that you would convey to Warden Gomez that we really appreciate his interest and engagement.

And my question is, many people view correctional institutions as places where you have got to stay on top of the individuals, in terms of trying to have compliance with whatever the requirements are. How supportive has the Illinois Department of Corrections been to this activity at Sheridan?

Ms. Duffield. Sir, I will definitely convey to Warden Gomez your appreciation for our continued support for the Father's Day program.

The Illinois Department of Corrections is 100 percent behind reentry programs, especially focusing on fathers and reentering into the community with the most positive support, community support, programs to help reduce recidivism, bringing families together. We definitely have got a new focus on evidence-based programs now that the focus is on such programs.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much. And I certainly look forward every year to the Saturday coming up.

Mr. Sullivan, I must tell you, I have been so impressed with the work that you all are doing, and this is not my first encounter with you on the fatherhood issues. How receptive is the community where you are located to the program that you run?

Mr. Sullivan. Thank you, Chairman. We have been doing this work for 21 years. Our community is wide open. I list off a number of agencies that refer into our work, but over 45 percent of our referrals come from word of mouth. When I say

community, I am talking about family members making referrals, moms, grandmothers, aunts making referrals into the program.

When I talk about the commitment to the program, you can believe I thank God for my Federal grant, but I also thank the community for the other resources that we are able to raise from our community that we cannot use Federal dollars to spend. And that community has been behind us for 21 years.

As the founder, I didn't start off with Federal money. I started off with community money. In the late nineties, 1998, 1999, so forth, the President put money into Responsible Fatherhood work. When those dollars went away after about 3 years or so, a lot of fatherhood agencies or programs, they failed. But in St. Louis, we grew. Thank God for our community in St. Louis. We not only grew in the ability to keep our doors open, but we are seeing, oh, 500 in the fatherhood program, about another 200 in the reentry program. And it doesn't matter what you label it, every guy who comes into my program goes through Responsible Fatherhood. Whether it is reentry, skip rope, he is going to get some Responsible Fatherhood when he comes through my door.

Chairman Davis. Well, thank you very much. You know, we have always heard, Mr. Gonzales, that a man ain't supposed to cry. And, of course, the chairman ain't supposed to cry either. But, you know, I have been going to hearings now for about 40 years and I don't ever recall reaching in my pocket at a hearing for a handkerchief or something that would just kind of help me through the moment.

Is there any advice that you would give to other men who may have been at the space where you were before you came into the program?

Mr. Gonzales. Whenever I joined the program, like I said, I was excited for it. And I would have to say that this is the biggest opportunity that I have ever wanted was to be a good dad. And I would have to tell them that, you know, to actually understand

about how being a parent is would probably go through this program, TRUE Dads, because they did it.

I have a better view of being a better father. And not just that, but a co-parent to my daughter, you know, because I might be, the stepdad, but she is my baby. And like I said, once I have that opportunity to sign that birth certificate, I will.

I would just tell them if they want to learn more about being a real dad -- there is a difference between a dad and a father. You know, anybody can call themselves a dad, but it takes a father to be there. It takes them to want to love their child, to interact with them, to spend time with them, to love them. That is what makes a father to me, not a dad.

Chairman Davis. Thank you all so very much.

Representative Walorski, you may inquire.

Mrs. Walorski. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gonzales, happy Father's Day again. And, you know, I just have to pause and just say this. One of the things that we have been looking at and I have been involved with Chairman Davis as well is looking at human beings as human beings again. Not just numbers that receive government help, but inserting people back into this equation, where we help each other and we value human dignity again, and it crosses party lines and it doesn't belong to anybody but us.

And when the gentleman and the lady got up to come to you and help you through that testimony, it was such a great example of what we are talking about on this entire committee, which is inserting compassion and people back into helping each other survive and to get through the issues that we all face to be successful and have a shot at the American Dream.

So congratulations again on your marriage, and on your new family member

coming in August or sooner. So thanks again for being here.

Just for a second, I wanted to focus on the motto of TRUE Dads, which is “win at parenting, work in relationships, so kids win at life.” And in my community in northern Indiana, we have strong values about work and family. It makes a great environment for folks to raise their children. But when pieces are missing, most recently due to opioids that have taken parents from our homes and especially fathers, it does have consequences for kids.

I saw this during my 4 years my husband and I spent working with children in the eastern European country of Romania, which has multiple levels of problems. But I see now in my own community, with the help of my husband who is an elementary school teacher, just how this translates out into our everyday life in a country that most people from outside this country think that we all have the world by the tail. And without fathers or men around, we need to work so much harder to help kids understand the value of working until a job is done, the importance of teamwork, even how to handle the hierarchy relationships that we all deal with, whether it is father-son, coach-player, and eventually boss-employee.

Mr. Gonzales, you talked about in your written statement about wanting to be a better parent, but not knowing how. Just so we really get the simplicity of what you have been talking about, what are some of the things you look forward to doing with your kids in the coming months or years? What does that list look like?

Mr. Gonzales. Well, ma'am, there are a lot of things I would love to do with, like I said, I am new to all the parenting stuff. And I would love to play teatime with my daughter or, you know, when my son comes, you know, we would be able to play them video games and, you know, go outside and spend -- throw the ball. You know, you don't really see that a whole lot, and I would love to do that with my kids in the future.

And, you know, I already play cards with my daughter sometimes, so I mean -- and we play around. We do a lot that I have never done before. And it has just grown as time progresses. So once she gets older, I know she is going to get to that point in age where she is going I don't want to do that no more, Dad. Well, I do.

But I want to spend time with them. I want to, you know, have teatime with my daughter. I want to play video games and art, throw the ball outside with my son when he gets older. I want to spend that quality time with my family, because now I know how important it is to them, but, most importantly, how more important it is to my kids. So that is what I want.

Mrs. Walorski. Well, thanks again for being here to both of you. And, you know, for the folks that watch these hearings on C-SPAN, sometimes I wonder how they do, but sometimes in the middle of the night people are writing in to our staffs talking about what happened on a committee day or that kind of thing.

And I am just glad you are here to share your message to other fathers as we go into a Father's Day that basically says, you can do it. You know, I did it, you can do it. And that is so much the desire. And my passion is to be able to do something that actually helps where we all help each other and we put the human enrichment right back in where it has been taken out years ago.

Dr. Bell, your testimony talks about efforts in Indiana to engage fathers through the Department of Child Services. They made a concerted effort to adjust and develop programming specifically for men. Are we seeing other States doing this, and do you draw any lessons we can learn from Indiana?

Mr. Bell. Yes, we are seeing other States move down this pathway, but I think the lesson that I would draw and extend, which was in the oral testimony, is how do we reconceptualize what we mean when we talk about fatherhood programs? And how do

we engage fathers as parents more than just as breadwinners? Because when I was listening to Sam talk and he talked about I want to spend time with my child, that is one of the most critical aspects.

It is not so much what you are doing in that time as long as it is positive, healthy engagement and you are developing a relationship. Because it is that relationship, Sam, that will determine whether or not she says, I don't want to do that anymore. Because she is going to want to be around you. And that is the thing that we would say to any State that is looking to develop healthy programs is that reconceptualize what you think the role of the father is in a family. And that is what we have learned from Indiana and we are sharing with others.

Mrs. Walorski. That is great. Thanks so much.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

And I now recognize Dr. Chu.

Ms. Chu. Well, first of all, let me thank you, Mr. Gonzales. Your testimony was very, very moving and also so powerful. It is a powerful message to fathers everywhere. So thank you.

And, Mr. Howard, as a representative of California, I welcome you here. In California, there are more than 3,000 families that are Tribal TANF beneficiaries. And one of the things that stood out to me in your testimony is that your program serves a very distinct population compared to some of the larger State and nonprofit-run family support programs that receive TANF funding.

Can you expand on how embedding cultural Native American components and training into your program has made it more successful? Can you give an example of a father that has changed through your program, how they were when they came in, what

they did, and then how they were when they came out?

Mr. Howard. Sure. Thank you for the question. For our programs serving the Native American population, it is always important in any services that we are providing that we make it relevant to them and relatable.

One of the things that we find as an important factor in a family or an individual becoming self-sufficient is really having self-identity and really understanding their history and having that strong understanding. So we find oftentimes, especially -- our service area is very broad. We serve Tribal communities, we also serve urban American Indian population -- those families, if they don't always have a strong understanding of their cultural identity, they really appreciate when we are bringing that in, because that is part of what helps them to learn and helps them to, you know, ultimately move themselves and their families forward.

I guess an example I can provide is at the end of every one of our 12-week sessions, we do sort of a celebration for those participants, where we allow them to come up and also bring their family members, and we provide dinner and we allow them to share some of their stories. And so one particular father that I can think of had recently been incarcerated, had come out and had enrolled in our 12-week program. And he had actually done that once before and only made it through a couple weeks and then other circumstances forced him to spend time elsewhere. But he ended up coming back and actually completing the program.

And one of the things that he shared was that he really, in terms of this aspect of communicating with his children, didn't realize the importance of that until he had actually gone through the program and actually met and talked with other fathers and, you know, got some new strategies to engage his children. So, he currently is not -- you know, he hasn't gone back into the system. He is currently doing really well.

And so it is just examples like that that I think show the effectiveness of the programs, the way it is engaging and also having fathers think more responsibly about, you know, their contributions to their own families.

Ms. Chu. And I was also struck by what you said about focusing not just on biological fathers, but also on noncustodial fathers and father figures. And it is really important, because a modern family may not conform to the stereotype. Today grandparents, aunts, uncles, LGBTQ couples may also provide for children, and programs should ensure that these individuals get support as well.

So can you tell me how your program defines fatherhood, and what services are available to the noncustodial fathers? And give examples of what kind of participants you have had that are like these father figures, noncustodial fathers?

Mr. Howard. Sure. One of the important aspects of that is just like you said, the modern family is a little bit different. Our program opens up to any couples that present themselves as adults, as an adult couple. So that, you know, opens the door for same sex participants in our programs.

One of the areas where we have seen an increase in our caseload is in our grandparents or caretaker relatives. And so, again, that is another segment of the population that we don't often think of as needing these services, but sometimes it is good for them, especially if they have, you know, raised their kids and now they are raising grandkids. So I think, yes, thinking more broadly of that definition of who is really that father figure in those children's lives is important.

I am trying to remember the second part of your question. I am sorry.

Ms. Chu. Well, just other examples of noncustodial parents.

Mr. Howard. Yeah. So, you know, couples living together. It could be a boyfriend that is in the home that is, you know, living, presenting as a couple, a

grandparent. It could even be an uncle. So we really use sort of a broad definition of that.

And so they are able to participate in pretty much most of our programming as long as they meet the definition, that broad definition.

Ms. Chu. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman Davis. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Estes.

Mr. Estes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank you to all the witnesses for being here with us today. You know, as the father of three children, I want to thank the subcommittee for taking time to address how we can support families. We know from research that outcomes for children are better when parents are married and believe that the best foundations for a stable home and a prosperous future.

However, we also know that we have millions of single parents throughout the country doing their best through a variety of circumstances of keeping together and making their family successful. Unfortunately, we also are seeing some of the welfare programs have unfairly pushed fathers to the side in terms of the focus that they had, and the results of what they have ended up.

The 1996 welfare reform in particular focused on increasing childcare and work for single moms. However, it overlooked one of the four factors for spending TANF funds, which is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. Clearly, increasing responsibility for fatherhood should remain a top priority.

That is why the reforms to TANF that we propose for the JOBS for Success Act promote greater opportunities for fathers to engage in workforce programs, because

fathers are an important part of the child's development and should be financially responsible, engaged in improving those outcomes for those children, or their children.

In my home State of Kansas, we have had success in reaching fathers when mothers apply for childcare and food stamps through reforms to increase the child support cooperation. You know, 6 months after this reform was enacted in Kansas, the households that had originally not cooperated received an increase of almost 39 percent in child support, a total of nearly \$665,000. That is money that helps that family be more stable to help that child in their development.

Unfortunately, currently Kansas has an administration that is seeking to roll back some of those successful reforms enacted for assistance programs like TANF, by allowing people who haven't followed mandated work requirements to continue receiving assistance. Not only does this ignore our law, but also the reforms aimed at encouraging work and child support cooperation support families should not be ignored.

With currently 5 million child support cases not being collected annually throughout the country, keeping dads accountable and involved obviously will help from a child support standpoint, but it is one area that we can help keep the fathers more engaged in their children's lives.

One of the things we have talked about in the panel and I look forward to hearing more as we continue through this process is, what are some of those best opportunities we can do to help keep children on the best path for success.

RPTR BRYANT

EDTR ZAMORA

Mr. Estes. Mr. Gonzales, I want to thank you for sharing your story this morning. You know, you mentioned you are starting a new job, and part of that is due to your involvement with TRUE Dads. Can you tell a little bit more about the support and the encouragement and the resources that TRUE Dads used to help you connect, to help you get more stable, and then get the training that helped you move forward with your career?

Mr. Gonzales. With the training that I requested through TRUE Dads was whenever I was speaking to my coach about it. And they have helped me in many ways, such as the resource center, the resume making, application process and stuff. I did not know how to make a resume at all. So with their resource, they helped me, and they were there to answer any questions that I had.

Some of my jobs required some safety certifications, such as the OSHA 510, 511, the OCSS, and CPR/first aid and the OSHA 30 classes, which was the job that I am taking over tomorrow as a safety coordinator. They did not have any of the resources available at the center. They had a list of places that would help us, you know, such as medical, dental, vision, anything that we needed outside of TRUE Dads.

Mr. Estes. Yes. That is where some of those programs have the greater benefits is working together and who has got the best expertise to help with that. So I appreciate hearing that story.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

And we will now go to Representative Sewell.

Ms. Sewell. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the male colleagues on this dais. Our colleagues and those males in the audience, happy Father's Day to all of you. I lost my father 2 years ago, and he was such an instrumental part of my life. As the only girl, I was definitely a daddy's girl. And it is just remarkable to me how so many male figures stand in the gap of so many troubled youth as well as young people at risk.

And we have several programs in the State of Alabama in my own district that I am very proud of. In the city of Birmingham, we have a program called Growing Kings, Building Stronger Men Every Day. And Growing Kings is a mentoring program for at-risk youth, and I have lots of friends who have served as mentors in that program.

And my dad, having been a coach, he was a surrogate father to so many young folks. And my mom was a high school librarian. So I feel very blessed to have had that opportunity. And while I don't have children of my own, I know when you talk about reconceptualizing fatherhood, we can also reconceptualize motherhood. Oftentimes, you know, it is the nurturing that one receives that is really most important.

And so figuring out ways that we as the Federal Government can serve as a conduit to invest in our greatest resource, which are our people, and in doing so help uplift families. And that is when families are in crisis, whether it is incarceration, whether it is single mothers trying to raise their children or single fathers trying to raise kids, being able to provide that uplifting support is critically important.

So my first question is to you, Mr. Sullivan. You talked about successfully using Federal grant dollars for your program, but before that you had community money. What have you seen to be the biggest help in terms of fostering programs that promote fatherhood and that serve and undergird the development of fatherhood, which is not just the physical but mostly the mental bond that goes on with children and their fathers,

and provide them with the skills that they need, parenting skills as well as work skills?

Mr. Sullivan. When you say what has been the biggest help, I assume you are talking about resource-wise.

Ms. Sewell. Yes.

Mr. Sullivan. I would say the Federal Government dollars has been the biggest help. It is one thing to receive discretionary dollars out of your community. That is great and we need those dollars, but the Federal Government has a tendency to hold you accountable. Accountability for us has helped us to strengthen the work that we do. The Federal Government dollars also come with different words, and some of them I don't understand. Best practice, research-based.

Ms. Sewell. Yes. Evidence-based.

Mr. Sullivan. Evidence-based. Although I say I may not understand it, what it encourages you to do is to dig deeper into your field, deeper into your practice to learn from what others have done in order to make your work better work. And we have been able to do that.

Ms. Sewell. So the single piece of Federal dollars that has helped you the most has been what?

Mr. Sullivan. The push towards evidence-based practice, the push towards the research, to indulge yourself and your programming. Learn from policy, learn from practice to do better. What I hope to do is to better my program. Twenty-one years ago when I got involved in this, I was making it up as I go, okay. I am a product of the community. My mainline staff, they come out of the community. They were once in our program. So we made it up as we go.

Ms. Sewell. I hear you.

Mr. Sullivan. However, we got involved with seeking those dollars, because they

will allow you a greater reach, allow you to be able to provide to more. Those first 5 or 6 years, I was fortunate we could provide to 80 guys a year. I am doing about 750 guys this year.

Ms. Sewell. What do you think, recommendations would you make in terms of how we can strengthen those Federal programs?

Mr. Sullivan. More.

Ms. Sewell. More money?

Mr. Sullivan. More money.

Ms. Sewell. Mr. Gonzales, I wanted to echo the sentiments of my colleagues and just applaud you for the uplifting, inspiring story of your life. And I know that your life's journey is still continuing, and look forward to the next chapter of your life.

But I wanted to ask you, if you had to talk to lawmakers who literally have the purse strings, what would you say was the single most valuable program that helped you in TRUE Dads? Was it the certification program, was it the work program, or was it --

Mr. Gonzales. It was the classes together. The classes is what got us the most, because every time they were talking about something, it got us. Like we would look at each other and be like that is us. So it is not all about, oh, TRUE Dads can provide this for me. It is about this is what TRUE Dads can make me into a better father.

So to me, it is not all about the programs or, hey, TRUE Dads will get me this certification for my job. It is TRUE Dads can make me a better father. That was most important.

Ms. Sewell. So the opportunity for you and Kayla to have one-on-one coaching, mentoring, training about parenting?

Mr. Gonzales. They have a thing called the listener tactic. It is when I give her the opportunity to talk and I sit back and listen. And once she is done, it goes to me and

she listens. And I basically say, hey, look, this is how you feel about it and I respect that. And so we give each other the opportunity. And whenever it gets too out of hand, we make it safe for our daughter. And normally, she will say that is part of the three keys is to make it safe. And when we are in front of our daughter and we let it get a little bit out of control, timeout. You know, we call a timeout or she will come up and say, hey, make it safe. And that right there will bring me back. Okay, this is what we learned in class and this is what we need to do.

Ms. Sewell. Very good. Well, happy Father's Day, and I know that you will make an excellent father to the new baby, and your daughter is blessed to have you as a dad as well.

Mr. Gonzales. Thank you so much.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

And Dr. Wenstrup.

Mr. Wenstrup. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here. This has been very good. You know, I lost my father about a month ago, and he lost his father when he was 14. And I always wondered how he knew how to be such a good father when he lost his father so young, but somehow he did it. And, you know, he taught us when we were young that you shake someone's hand, you look them in the eye. And I was always blessed, because growing up and throughout our whole life, if you met somebody who knew my dad, they always said, he was a great guy, all the time.

So I feel very blessed. I was one of five kids and, you know, Christmas and everything we would always say, Dad, what do you want for Christmas? What do you want for your birthday? He would always say, I just want your love and respect. That is all he ever wanted. So I feel very fortunate.

So I got married late. I didn't know if I would ever have the opportunity to have someone say daddy's home. But I do have a 5-year-old right now, a 5-year-old son and a 1-year-old daughter. And it just thrills me when I see my son and he wants to come up here to the Capitol and he wants to put on a tie and a coat. And I am an Army doctor, and how he wants to get that Army uniform and play with the stethoscope and all that good stuff. And our daughter's adopted, and it just thrills me when I walk in that door and she screams "Daddy" and comes running. And I thought, she wouldn't have had that, she wouldn't have had that if she wasn't adopted. And we feel so blessed. And you realize how much influence you have on their life and how important this is. So it is just beyond the personal responsibility of yourself, what influence you have on these children.

Mr. Gonzales, congratulations. Congratulations on your marriage, your two children. As Congresswoman Sewell said, your kids are blessed, they really are. And you can't see behind you, but you got one woman who is so proud of you. You can feel it, right? It is just coming out. And all the best of luck.

Mr. Sullivan, I look at the work you are doing, and it is phenomenal. But I got a question for you. You know, your background, from what I understand, you spent time in prison. And how did you make this change and then be able to have such an influence on so many other people?

Mr. Sullivan. Congressman, I want to tell you, you may not like it, but it was God all the way.

Mr. Wenstrup. I have no problem with that, sir.

Mr. Sullivan. Well, thank you. It was God all the way. On one of my last trips in, I had already told myself that I was not coming back, but I came back. And I just said, I can't do this by myself, I am going to need some help. And I just cried out, and help

became available through my Father. And I have been walking that path ever since.

I learn about my Father as much as I can. I learn about other entities as well, but I stay very closely to my Father. And then I began to equip myself with knowledge as led by him. I discovered that I had done horrible, horrible things in my community. I grew up in the fifties and the sixties where black pride was a big thing, but here I was destroying my own community. So I decided to give back.

My journey took me first through substance abuse, which I was a dope fiend, so I decided I wanted to be a drug counselor. As I moved down that path, they invited me to be on the board of the agency that I came out of. And I saw drug addicts relapse real fast. I thank God I have got 26 years in with no relapse, but I saw relapse happening real fast.

In that process, I changed my mind, said, I might want to work with kids. I want to work with kids so that they don't make the same decisions that I made at the age I started making bad decisions, around about 14 years old. Came from a great family. We were just po'. P-o po', not p-o-o-r. Came from a great family.

And so, with that being said, I came down this journey. When I got down the journey about to graduate with a master's degree, I came in contact with some kids that did not have fathers in their lives. And I thought about my own life and I thought about the things that did not occur that these kids were occurring. I thought about the value of a father. Parents are the first role model. The father being at the events. The little girl who is called princess. She is told she is beautiful. She is bought her first trinkets by the father. Along my journey, I read about the different negatives that occur, associated my own life, my own things in the community with it. I said, this is the direction that I want to go.

Mr. Wenstrup. Yeah, you had enough evidence in your life. You didn't need to

read it on a white paper anywhere, did you?

And I appreciate it. And, with that too, Warden, the work that you are doing, you know, we recently passed prison reform, and I think there is a lot we can do within our prison system. Imagine leaving with the skills that we are talking about and imagine leaving with the skills towards a job. You have a pretty captive audience at that time. And I just hope we continue down this path of trying to make changes in people's lives in that way, because one of the things that did strike me too is there is a difference between the time you spend with that child and child support. There is a big difference.

And anyway, I thank you all for being here and for the work that you are doing and sharing your experiences.

I yield back.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

Representative Evans.

Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the ranking member for giving us the opportunity to have this larger discussion, because I believe it is the basis of the development of a lot of communities right here, in terms of fathers taking the lead. So I applaud you for showing this.

Mr. Bell, in your testimony, you stated that the passage of the Family First Prevention Service Act has the potential to transform how States and Tribes support families, but there are some barriers to implementation. Can you please explain what those barriers are and how Congress can help to overcome them?

Mr. Bell. I would say that, for me, one of the major things that Congress can do is to think about what you intended when you passed this law. And I believe that the essence of what I have seen in the law, what I have seen from States and Tribes who are

seeking to implement the law is that there is an incredible opportunity here to build something that did not exist prior to Family First, and that is an effort around prevention up front. And that effort around prevention up front I believe is embedded in some of the conversations that we are having here.

Prevention -- and one of the things that I say in the written testimony is that fatherhood in and of itself is a preventive service, because what fathers do is to help shape an individual into the fabric of who they will become as an adult, but what the father is offering in that shaping is the notion that each child can be in control of their own future.

And so the challenges with Family First right now is just getting it started. The beginning of Families First drawing down prevention money is supposed to be October 1, 2019. That is 15 weeks away. There has been one jurisdiction that has submitted a plan to be approved to deliver and use the dollars in Families First, and they have not gotten the information and response necessary in order to move forward.

So I would just come back to say to Congress, what you intended when you passed this law, I believe, was to revolutionize the way that we treated families who were struggling and that we were not going to continue to use foster care as the most frequently utilized intervention in their lives, that you intended for us to be able to embrace families. And, Congressman, when you said that there is a difference between child support -- and I just say child support and child support, because one child support is about giving dollars, the other child support is about giving yourself.

And so the challenge with Family First is that it is not yet implemented, and we are 15 weeks away. The other challenge is that people don't fully understand what will be in the evidence-based clearinghouse and how many programs will be available in the evidence-based clearinghouse. And if you are restricted to utilizing these dollars on a

certain set of programs and you only have five programs in there, then you are restricted on what you are going to be able to do with the dollars.

So I would suggest that we need to have a broader conversation about implementation, and that there needs to be a joint conversation with States, with Tribes, and with Congress, and with the administration about how are we walking together to fully support children in this Nation, whether they are Tribal children, whether they are community children in St. Louis, or whether they are children in rural Mississippi where I am from, that we have to come together to give families the power to control their own destiny. And that is what I believe Family First is designed to do.

Mr. Evans. Mr. Sullivan, you mentioned the importance of community organizations to fatherhood programs. I think that is absolutely critical, and in my office, we try to work as much as possible with community organizations, back in Philadelphia, because they are the ones on the ground making a difference.

Can you please explain why partnerships with community organizations are so important when it comes to the success of the Fathers' Support Center?

Mr. Sullivan. Early on, the partnerships with community organizations allowed us to be able to receive services for our dads. Early on, in 1997, 1998, and 1999, there was little to no Federal support or dollars. Because of the relationships that we developed with community organizations, community-based organizations, we were able to provide services.

Early on, it was just me. I was able to provide employment training services by way of working with other community-based organizations. I was able to provide therapeutic services. I have been addressing trauma informed situations since about 1999. I was able to provide transportation dollars because I didn't have any transportation services.

So the community-based organizations are very valuable to assisting families to be able to build and come together. The community should be a part of helping to build children. Our States, they do a great job, but oftentimes, resources can go in another direction versus coming straight to a viable community-based organization.

Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Davis. Thank you, Mr. Evans.

And now we will go to Mr. Reed.

Mr. Reed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I just wanted to start by, I am sure, as all my colleagues echoed, Sam, your testimony was very impactful.

Mr. Gonzales. Thank you.

Mr. Reed. We share a common bond. I am the youngest of 12. You are the youngest of 7, right? And my father passed when I was 2. And so what I have experienced -- and that was 45 years ago. I am 47 years old. And that path at times has been very difficult, in the sense of not having that father figure in my life. And it has been a struggle of mine, to be perfectly honest with you.

And now that I have two children who are 19 and 21 in a month, you know, I try to spend as much time as I possibly can with them because of that loss, that lack of guidance that I had from not having that father figure in my life. But I was fortunate in my life to come across a couple people. My swim coach, Fred Sether (ph), who I think about often, he was a mentor. My college swim coach, Mike Shaverly (ph), who was a father figure and a role model of mine. And those two individuals did the best they could to kind of fill that hole. And then my mom obviously did yeoman's work being a mother and a father to try to fill that scar, if you would.

And so today, for example, I had an opportunity to share some time with leaders

of the Nation, leaders of the world today actually, on a phone call, and the CEO of a Fortune 50 company. And I got to tell you, the richest man I have met today is you, because you have recognized something in your journey that your kids are going to be proud of and that you are going to change the direction of for their entire life. And no dollar can equate to the riches that you achieved. And so I just come here today to applaud you. Love that story. And it is okay to cry. I have cried many a time and cried again today, and that is all right.

And one of the things that frustrate me oftentimes in these hearings, and today it is not one of those days, but, you know, is that as a Republican, you know, I don't have a heart, I don't care about people, and that we put these requirements on programs because somehow we want to take away those dollars to the people that need it most, you know, that uncompassionate Republican.

But I hope I demonstrated here to you today, and to each of you, as a Republican, a proud Republican, I share the commitment that my colleagues on the other side share. Using our precious hardworking taxpayer dollar to give that opportunity to succeed, that no program does, but you do by taking advantage of that program.

And so I guess, from your experience, Sam, in that program, how would you measure success? As a lawmaker, what advice could you give me to say this program works, this one doesn't? What could you give me as accountability so that we hold those taxpayer dollars -- hold our responsibility for those taxpayer dollars into check?

Mr. Gonzales. Proof. Like my parents always said and friends have always said, actions are better than words. And somebody has to be motivated and dedicated to do the program. If they are not, then they are not going to accomplish nothing. Proving and accomplishing things and showing that is proof. So I think, you know, with everything that TRUE Dads has done to me and has provided for me and as a father is

proof is what they --

Mr. Reed. So, Dr. Bell, to respond to Sam's point there, you made a comment in your testimony about Mr. Howard's program, that it doesn't have the resource for proof. How would you respond to Sam to say, how can we prove success on these programs which maybe haven't had the anecdotal data to back it up?

Mr. Bell. I think part of it is that there are organizations that can align and support a program that doesn't have the research base to move things forward. There are universities across this country that can open their doors and provide the research support that is necessary.

The comments that I was making is that when a program is under-resourced, the ability to actually prove that what they have done meets the evidence-based standard is virtually impossible for that program to do it alone. And I think that that is something that we need to think about from a congressional perspective and from the laws, because Families First is written now and it is one that requires this evidence-based process that is already well-defined. And this program would have to find a way to either come across money or find a partnership with a foundation like Casey Family Programs, which we can't be the partner for every organization in the country, find a university partnership that is willing to do what is necessary.

But in order to have what is proven in the lives of the people who have come through these doors be accepted as an evidence-based program, it has to go through this process that is already defined. And that is something that I don't think that was considered when we were passing this law, and it is now in the implementation part of it. But I think it is something that we have to find a way to correct.

Mr. Reed. But it is still compassionate to require that proof?

Mr. Bell. I think it absolutely is, and it is what I think was being said here, is that

when you actually can say more than just anecdotally, that if you do these five things, you will get a similar result, that is an important aspect of proving that a program works. And it is not just enough for me to say, well, I helped five people.

Mr. Reed. Amen. With that, I yield back.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much.

Representative Moore.

Ms. Moore. Thank you very much. I just want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for making this hearing possible. I think this is really quite amazing.

I just want to say, with regard to both the FFPSA funding and the NPFF funding, that I think it is really quite essential, but I do want to lean into the evidence-based approaches and ask some questions maybe of Dr. Bell and of Mr. Sullivan in particular.

Does it keep you awake at night thinking about the evidence-based results, you know, that they don't take into account where people are? Mr. Sullivan is a success story. Do we have to wait 26 years just to prove that, oh, yeah, this worked, providing these resources created a successful person like him? On the other hand, will this create an incentive for people to sort of churn people through the program so that it can appear that they are successful? I remember some of the alcohol treatment programs where they grind you through in 30 days, dry you out, and send you on your way and then check, oh, yeah, we were successful in getting them off substance abuse.

Can you just tell me, number one, what kinds of evidence-based approaches that we ought to revisit so that we can give the kind of flexibility to the program so that they can actually take the time to work with people?

Mr. Bell. I would start with the category. So evidence-based is the end of the line. But there is promising practice, there is well-supported practice, which are two categories that are not as rigorous as the end of the line, evidence-based. And one of

the things that I indicated in my testimony is that 50 percent of the programming that States and Tribes can use the resources for would be well-supported programs. And so I think that there is an opportunity for us to help programs understand the distinction between promising, well-supported, and evidence-based.

But the science behind the evidence is about being able to say to someone, if you use this. It is like medicine. We have evidence from medical trials that says that if you take this pill, then a certain percentage of the time, because also in those trials there are the ones that don't have the outcome that we are looking for. I am looking at the doctor sitting here as I am saying that. But the science behind it is intended to be able to say, I know that I am using taxpayer dollars to pay for something, and I understand that what I am buying is going to get me the results that I am looking for.

Ms. Moore. Okay. So I was very curious, because the PACT did a study and they found that some of these programs didn't improve the self-esteem of the fathers. It didn't work toward helping people toward co-parenting, and it didn't necessarily improve the incomes of fathers in the program.

Are these things you think money, Mr. Sullivan, will help us lean into, and what is your experience? I mean, you have talked about getting people -- we got Sam here who got a great new job and -- you know, so he is an example of what can be done with proper resources. Do you think that resourcing is an issue for closing the gap of stuff that is doable?

Mr. Sullivan. I think resources and a lack of resources are always part of the problem. Resources will be part of the answer. I think we need to take a look at some of the truer issues when we talk about evidence-based, resource-based, and things of that nature. I always question and I ask, whose evidence are we looking at? Who is conducting the evidence? When we talk --

Ms. Moore. Whose report will you believe?

Mr. Sullivan. Exactly. When we talk about different studies, who conducted that study? What was their construct? What was their mindset? I participated in studies, and oftentimes, researchers, when they bring you the framework that they want you to work from, they could change how you are doing your work in order to fit into the framework. So the researcher will bring a certain perspective to the work that they are doing as well.

I take a closer look at many, many, many, many factors. I have three main things I look at for success: Is he working? Is he paying his child support? Is he seeing his child? Now, from those three things, there may be other elements that I might pull from. But I design what I see or want to see for success for our program and for our people.

Ms. Moore. Let me take my last second here to talk about child support. The only witness missing from this panel, Mr. Davis, is Paul Ryan, former Speaker of the House, because in the Budget Committee, we passed numerous times the child support passthrough legislation where we incentivized the payment of child support by passing every dime of it through to the custodial parent instead of old Medicaid bills, admin costs, and so on. And so I think when we mark this up, I would hope that this committee would look at that. And if we have to drag Paul Ryan in from his vacation, we will do that.

And I yield back.

Chairman Davis. Thank you very much. Paul went through a great deal [inaudible] see him in the airport.

Ms. Moore. And, Sam, let me tell you. The only father worse than you was my dad. My dad would let me eat as much cotton candy as I wanted till I got sick to my

stomach. So I know the kind of dad you are. That is bad. You can't do that.

Chairman Davis. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Rice.

Mr. Rice. What a great hearing. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for putting this together, and Mrs. Walorski. And thank you to all the witnesses for what you had to say.

Mr. Sullivan, I was so moved by your testimony. And you said that what saved you was God, and I pray every day for God to use me as a tool to lift all his people.

One of the things that really I am curious about, is your program faith-based? Do you have a faith-based program?

Mr. Sullivan. No, sir. My program is not a faith-based program, not in that sense.

Mr. Rice. And I look at these problems nationwide and I look at my district, and it seems like the need for this kind of thing is growing and not shrinking, which makes me think that the problem is getting worse and not better.

What do you think, Mr. Sullivan?

Mr. Sullivan. I think there are a lot of other new factors that may be leaning toward it appearing to look worse. New factors. This recent crisis, this opioid crisis will lead to continued fatherlessness. The way our criminal justice system operates will lean towards more fatherlessness. Then there is another factor. Our country is engaged on several continents in several different wars that may lead to more fatherlessness.

I think that we need to look more closely at our society. We live in the greatest one in the world, but we have an economic problem in our communities. Paying people \$9, \$10 an hour, that is not going to get it, when the average per capita income is about

\$50,000 or \$60,000 and I make \$9 an hour. We need to give some thought process to how we can change that for those communities. We call them at-risk communities. I guarantee you, most of those people in those communities would not call themselves at risk. They say, we po'.

Mr. Rice. I have got three counties in my district that are just -- they are historically majority African American. Thirty percent of the people live in poverty. Thirty percent of the people don't work. And on the other hand, I have got, you know, employers screaming for employees.

How do I bring these -- how do I bring this glaring need on the one hand and this supply of people, how do I bring these people back and plug them in? Help me with that.

Mr. Sullivan. If you believe what I believe, then you know there is a devil in the planet too. At our agency, our primary goal is to enhance responsible behavior, but we center that around the child. We use the therapeutic processes that help individuals to start thinking differently. If we can get them to look at how they perceive themselves differently, they can then adjust their attitude, which will adjust their behavior.

Not everybody that comes into our program is successful. I have Federal evaluations wanting to know why I put so many out, because I have certain rules that you must adhere to. You can't be late. You can't wear your pants falling down. You got to use the appropriate type of language while you are in the program. Those things will cause you to be withdrawn. Now, you can come back, okay.

Now, we also let it be well known in our community that we will also -- we work diligently. Last report, we managed to get 72 percent of our felons hired. We work diligently to get you hired, but we require that you follow certain rules. In other words, with the devil being around, I can't save everybody, but we require that you participate in

a process of saving yourself.

Mr. Rice. I got people telling me that they have to train people to show up to work on time and wearing appropriate clothes and that kind of thing. Do you deal with all that?

Mr. Sullivan. I have a lot of people telling me that my program is a little bit too tough. Five days a week from 8 o'clock to 4 o'clock for 6 weeks.

Mr. Rice. Sounds like work.

Mr. Sullivan. Practice being on time. That is right. Practice to be on time. And we require that you -- if you miss 2 days or are late 2 days, the Feds going to get mad at me because I ain't going to reach my numbers. I am going to drop you. You can come back. But right now, we are practicing.

Employment is a very high thing. Time spent for the child, as we know, is the most valuable thing. Time spent decreases negative peer pressure. Time spent is a part of modeling good behavior. But a man without a job cannot be a good daddy. He can't buy ice cream. He can't buy tennis shoes.

Mr. Rice. It sounds to me like you are being a father to 750 people at a time.

Mr. Sullivan. Oh, wow.

Mr. Rice. Mr. Bell, it seems like the problem is getting worse. Is it getting worse, and what can we do to slow it down?

Mr. Bell. I would say that we are opening our eyes to see more. And we are responding differently, particularly in the way that we are responding in the opioid crisis.

Mr. Rice. So you are saying it is not getting worse; it is just we are now recognizing.

Mr. Bell. We are recognizing. Because in the crack crisis, we treated the addicted people as though they were criminals. In the opioid crisis, we are treating

them as people who have a disease, and we are trying to find a different way to engage them. And so, therefore, people are availing themselves for treatment, but there are also highly addictive substances that they are dealing with.

And so I think that the more that we are able to see what is going on, it requires us to behave differently, as the lawmakers to behave differently, as the program providers to behave differently, as the foundations or the researchers.

But ultimately, what we have got to do is embrace people as human beings and understand what addiction is and understand the long history of living in -- I don't like to use the word "poverty" -- living in insufficient income environments, because sufficiency of income is something that we can do something about. The tax base that pays for the public schools that our children go to is something that we can do something about. But if you are living in an insufficient income community, then your tax base on your home ownership produces a lesser amount of resources to pay for your education environment than it would if you lived in a higher income environment.

And so we have a history that has been built on top of itself for many, many years where generations of people have grown up in insufficiency of income and, therefore, the quality of the schools that they go to, the quality of the institutions in their communities are less than the quality of schools and institutions in other communities.

And until we are willing to address that long history and change -- and it is not just the sufficiency of income, but to change the institutions where we are allowing children to be raised. I am from Washington State, in around the city of Seattle. There is a body of water about a mile wide. If a child is born today on one side of the body of that water, that child's life expectancy is 10 years less than a child born on the other side of that body of water. And we know that.

And until we are willing to address what we know, because we are responsible

and accountable for what we know, and we do know that 20 percent of the approximately 33,000 residential ZIP Codes in this country contain about 80 percent of all the children who live in poverty in America. We know that 20 percent of the approximately 33,000 residential ZIP Codes in this country contain 76 percent of all of the adults who are 25 years or older whose highest level of academic achievement is something less than a GED.

Until we are willing to actually address the longstanding lack of equity in the way children are allowed to exist on a day-to-day basis, we are going to be dealing with these challenges. And when we open our eyes, it may look like the problem has gotten worse, but if you have lived in one of these 6,600 ZIP Codes that I am talking about, it has been worse all your life.

Mr. Rice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

[Applause.]

The Chairman. Let me thank all of the witnesses for your testimony. And please be advised that members have 2 weeks to submit written questions to be answered later in writing. Those questions and your answers will be made part of the formal hearing record.

An excellent hearing. I want to thank again all of the witnesses. I want to thank the members for attending. And I certainly want to thank all of the staff for putting together such a hearing as this.

I couldn't help but think of my own father, who lived with me the last 5 years of his life, that is on weekends and holidays, and I heard him through all of the testimony. And the thing that he often ended with was 'nuff said, go ahead.

It has been a great hearing. Thank you all so much.

[Whereupon, at 4:14 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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[Dr. Ronald B. Mincy](#)

[Ms. Sharon McGroder](#)

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