

REN-19-037: *Promoting Healthy Pregnancies and Families through the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act*

Sponsor: Jennifer Hughes

Summary:

- In the 113th and 114th Congresses, two Senate bills (S. 237 and S. 2060) were introduced to update federal programs that support children and adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
- During both sessions of Congress the bills were referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee but were never moved out of the Committee.
- Resolution REN-19-037 urges Congress to reintroduce and pass the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act or similar legislation.

Issue:

Prenatal alcohol exposure can result in FASD, an umbrella term used to describe the range of cognitive and behavioral impairments, including physical, mental, behavioral, and learning disabilities with possible life-long implications for children and adults.

American Indian and Alaska Natives have some of the highest rates of FASD in the United States. Moreover, tribal nations can spend anywhere from \$850,000 to \$4 million on one individual with FASD over their lifetime. There is no cure for FASD and children or adults who have a FASD may have difficulties with learning, memory, judgement, attention spans, impulse control, and communication skills. As a result of the impairments, these same children or adults could be unable to attend school due to disruptive behavior, become incarcerated, have difficulty sustaining employment, and/or develop alcohol and substance abuse problems.

The Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act would update and fortify federal programs that support research, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and services for children and adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The Act also focuses on education and outreach about FASD to promote the health and welfare across the United States.

During the 113th and 114th Congresses, the Act was introduced with bi-partisan support, however, they were never moved out of the HELP committee. No member of Congress has since moved to reintroduce the Act or similar legislation.

Action:

REN-19-037 urges Congress to reintroduce and pass the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act or similar legislation.

For additional information, please contact Jacob Schellinger at jschellinger@ncai.org or Kelbie Kennedy at kkennedy@ncai.org.

Resolution Action Plan: REN-19-037

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Action Plan:

- 30 Days:
 - Reach out to the resolution sponsor to speak about the background of the bill and why it failed to move out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP) Committee for two sessions of Congress.
 - Conduct additional background research on funding streams open to tribal nations to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
 - Conduct additional research on FASD in tribal communities.
 - Reach out to our partners at NICWA to see if they are working on this issue and if they have any background resources on this topic.
 - Reach out to additional tribal organizations that may be working on this issue.
 - Identify potential Senate and House sponsors and co-sponsors for the bill on the committees of jurisdiction.
 - Identify potential Senate and House co-sponsors on the appropriate appropriations committees.
- 60 Days:
 - Identify relevant examples of tribal concerns.
 - Develop an advocacy message plan.
 - One pager on the issue and the bill for the Hill.
 - Talking points.
 - Letters.
 - Reports that include data and info graphics etc.
 - Reach out to the Act's original sponsor to see if the Senator would be willing to reintroduce the bill with additional tribal language.
 - If the Senator is not willing to reintroduce the bill, identify potential Senate sponsors for the bill.
 - After a main Senate sponsor is located reach out to potential co-sponsors on the Senate HELP Committee and Appropriations Committee.
- 90 Days:
 - Reach out to House potential sponsors for a companion bill.
 - Send out information about the issue to NCAI member tribal nations.
 - Provide additional information to House and Senate office staff as needed.
 - Reach out to appropriate Senate and House committee staff to brief them on the issue and bill.
 - Work with communications team to develop a short term and long term communications plan.
 - Arrange additional House meetings as needed.

- Follow up with tribal nations, House and Senate offices, and appropriate committee staff regarding the bill.
- 120 Days:
 - Continue Hill visits and collaborate with tribal nations, relevant tribal organizations, and allies.