

The Child Protection Improvements Act (CPIA)



February 12, 2019

History of CPIA

- In 2001 MENTOR convened 70+ mentoring and YSOs – ID'd background checks as a big challenge
- MENTOR launched a legislative campaign to make access to fingerprint checks **universal, affordable, and timely**
- Then Senator Joe Biden agreed to champion the issue



Why CPIA?

- 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before they turn 18
- A referral of child abuse is made every 9 seconds and Child Protective Services responds to a report of sexual abuse every 9 minutes.
- Every year more than 3.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving more than 6.6 million children

History of CPIA

- In 2003, Congress passed the PROTECT Act
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children selected to run the Child Safety Pilot
 - Provide fingerprint-based screening for nonprofit YSOs
 - Keep costs low
 - Offer quick turn-around
 - Provide fitness determinations
- 18-months turned into an 8-year pilot



Child Safety Pilot (NCMEC)

- Well over 100,000 records run over 8 years (2003-2011)
- Found:
 - More than 6 percent of volunteers had serious criminal records of concerns (red light)
 - 42 percent of volunteers had record(s) of concerns in states *other* than where they were applying
 - 23 percent showed a different name on their record than they used to applying to be a volunteer

2005
CPIA first
introduced



Next decade
Changes
made, stalled



115th Congress
Passage

- Bipartisan from the start
- Included stipend and appropriation
- Grant access to FBI
- Affordable
- Swift
- Mandated use by nonprofit YSOs

- Stipend stripped
- Appropriation eliminated
- Affordability still focus
- Turnaround focus minimized
- Mandate stripped
- Biden passed to Schumer

- Franken and Bishop new sponsors
- Emphasis on state process prevailing
- Pushback from FBI
- Pushback from unions and civil rights groups

What Worked

- The pilot run by NCMEC – it provided crucial data that bolstered our ask
- Maintaining bipartisan, bicameral sponsors throughout
- Coalition support was critical
- Providing real examples from state/Congressional districts demonstrating real pain
- Federal law changes that uncovered limited access to FBI fingerprint checks

What Didn't Work

- Time
 - every two years we had to start over
 - tiny changes to law multiply over time
- Apathy
 - staff leading the effort meant changes in interest
 - Media narrative drives interest

Must Do's and Don'ts

■ Must Do's

- Engage your grassroots: emails/social media messages to legislators can help; In-person meetings are the most effective
- Secure a coalition of support and make it easy for them to support you
- Get answers to the questions you're asked most frequently

■ Don'ts

- Don't assume you know a legislator's position
- Don't accept no as an answer...within reason
- Don't give up