April 25, 2011

The Honorable Roger Dickinson
California State Assembly
State Capitol Room 3126
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 823 (Dickinson) Children's Cabinet – Support

Dear Assemblymember Dickinson:

On behalf of First 5 LA, I am writing in support of your proposed law, Assembly Bill 823. As you know, AB 823 establishes the Children’s Cabinet of California to ensure all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children work in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion.

First 5 LA, a child advocacy and public grant making organization, was created by California voters to invest Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues to improve the lives of children from prenatal through age five in Los Angeles County. We recognize the importance of coordinating efforts on children’s issues between state agencies. In fact, supporting the integration of data is one of the top ten goals of the First 5 LA Public Policy Agenda (enclosed).

California’s budget crisis and realignment efforts demand even greater coordination to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of services; the elimination of duplicative efforts; the maximizing of federal funding; and the establishment of priorities and outcome measures for children. The delivery of health, education and children’s services will benefit from interagency collaboration, integrated services, and policies that support stronger communities.

According to the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices, “A strong and effective Children’s Cabinet can improve coordination and efficiency across state departments and local levels of government; mobilize resources around a governor’s priorities for children; facilitate a holistic approach to serving children; and strengthen partnerships with the non-profit and private sectors.”
Twenty states currently have established cross-agency children’s coordinating bodies that are systematically changing the fragmented and ineffective way states typically do business for children and youth. We would like to see California follow suit. If we can be of assistance, please contact Tessa Charnofsky, Government Affairs Manager, at (213) 482-7555 or via e-mail at tcharnofsky@first5la.org.

Sincerely,

Evelyn V. Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

EVM:jk

Enclosures: Public Policy Agenda