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Thursday, September 23, 2010

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa today joined fellow foster youth advocates to release new data showing the educational playing field is not level for children in foster care, whose academic careers are often affected by multiple school relocations. Grassley is founder and co-chair of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth and ranking member of the Finance Committee, with jurisdiction over foster care programs.

“One of the primary goals of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth is to get these kids involved in shaping the policy that affects them,” Grassley said. “We’ve heard firsthand from foster youth how hard it is to stay in the same school. A foster youth might get a new placement that’s a few miles from his current school, yet have to switch schools because of school district rules. New schools don’t always accept paperwork from the old school. Congress needs to look at whatever can be done to ease the burden on these kids and help them make healthy, lasting connections. And we’ll continue to hear from the kids themselves as we move forward on policy.”

Grassley joined a news conference held by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute and Fostering Media Connections to release preliminary findings from a pilot program showing that foster youth in four counties in California are less likely than their closely matched peers

and the general student population to achieve proficiency in English and math at all grade levels.

As one of the principal drafters of the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* – the most significant foster youth legislation to become law in recent years
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Grassley supported provisions to promote stability in educational placements for youth in foster care.

Earlier this year, Grassley spearheaded a request from the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth to the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee encouraging the committee to hear from foster youth in hearings on the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. The committee agreed and heard testimony from a former foster youth.

To watch video of Grassley's remarks at today's press conference, please click here .