



*Patrick Morrissey*  
*Office of the Governor*

April 1, 2026

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

The Honorable Kris Warner  
Secretary of State of West Virginia  
State Capitol Complex  
Building 1, Suite 157-K  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

**Re: Enrolled House Bill 4393**

Dear Secretary Warner:

Pursuant to Section Fourteen, Article VII of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove and return the Enrolled House Bill 4393 with the following objections:

Protecting children suffering from abuse or neglect in their own homes from any further harm is a deep obligation, and the fact that West Virginia was the first state to have a prevention plan approved by the federal government years ago reflects that commitment. By codifying the existing plan, the bill's author was striving to prevent harm to children. Unfortunately, this bill suffers from flaws that detract from that central intent.

To ensure the State can draw down federal dollars critical to benefiting children at risk and their families, there must be an acknowledgement of the state of relevant statutes, regulations, and guidance. The U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has made it clear that this is an area where ACF will be developing new guidance. Limiting the ability of the state to adapt its plan could deprive the Department of Human Services (DoHS) of eligibility.

As mentioned above, HB 4393 would expand the scope of the State's prevention plan, creating new entitlements without limitations. Currently, the State's prevention plan primarily services children and families who have reached a safety threshold, meaning there are real concerns of abuse or neglect of a child or that a child is at imminent risk of removal from their home to be placed in foster care. Services like home visitation, healthy grandparents, and parents as teachers inject structure and care into homes that actively need the support. But this bill requires DoHS to provide undefined "prevention services" in a vast array of circumstances that do not

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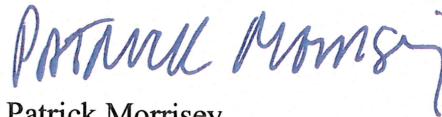
necessarily implicate safety concerns, such as being an adopted child, regardless of whether the adoption was the result of an abuse and neglect proceeding.

This also raises a concern about government intrusion. According to this bill a child is at risk of entering foster care because the child is “identified as having a family with an economic [...] need.” 87th Reg. Leg. Sess. H.B. 4393, p. 1, ln. 9-10 (March 11, 2026). Yet, an economic need does not translate to abuse and neglect, and it is disconcerting to see that kind of linkage here. The insertion of the state into the family should only occur when children are truly at risk. Ultimately, this is overly intrusive and paints with too broad a brush.

We must prioritize the safety and welfare of our most innocent and vulnerable West Virginians. On this there can be no debate. And, like the proponents of this bill, I believe that a statewide prevention plan is an important step in reaching this goal. Such a plan must incorporate meaningful risk factors and must focus on services necessary to strengthen the familial bonds of those in need. It is also necessary that the plan allows for flexibility and growth. The rigidity of codifying the plan and the breadth of the language is counterproductive.

As a result of these issues, I hereby disapprove and return the Enrolled House Bill 4393.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Morrissey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Patrick Morrissey  
Governor

cc: The Honorable Randy Smith,  
President of the Senate

The Honorable Roger Hanshaw  
Speaker of the House of Delegates