



## **U.S. Child Poverty Action Group Asks the Biden-Harris Administration to Commit to Cutting Child Poverty in Half Within a Decade**

As members of the U.S. Child Poverty Action Group, a partnership of organizations committed to ending child poverty in the United States, we are writing to ask that as the Biden-Harris Administration sets its domestic policy agenda, to please make child poverty reduction a top priority.

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, child poverty was a moral crisis in the United States that affected each and every one of us. Our child poverty rate remains consistently higher than that of our peer countries, and children in the United States continue to experience poverty at a rate 54 percent higher than adults. Due to our country's long history of systemic racism and discrimination, poverty rates for children of color are nearly three times that of white children. Annual child poverty figures from the U.S. Census Bureau underestimate the problem, for families with children living at twice the official poverty threshold still lack enough income to make ends meet.

The pandemic and resulting economic crisis have only served to expose and further exacerbate these existing inequities in our society. An [additional 2.5 million children](#) are living in poverty since May. Households of color with children are being hit the hardest by unemployment, as well as experiencing higher rates of infection and fatality from COVID-19 as parents are over-represented as essential workers and often lack access to paid sick leave. The closure of schools and childcare centers are leaving parents and guardians with few options for childcare and wraparound services while also creating widening education gaps.

Growing up in poverty has life-long consequences for a child's physical and mental health and economic well-being. In addition to negative consequences for individual children, child poverty has serious economic implications, [costing our country approximately \\$1 trillion a year](#). Yet a 2019 landmark study from the nonpartisan National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine confirms that we know how to reduce child poverty in the United States, we just lack the political will to act. Written by our nation's leading experts on child poverty, [A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty](#) models a set of policy and program changes that, if implemented, would cut our child poverty rate in half within a decade.

We ask that the Biden-Harris Administration establishes a formal commitment to cut our national child poverty rate in half within a decade, as well as support legislation, the Child Poverty Reduction Act (S. 4115/H.R. 7419), that would codify such a target into law and direct the National Academy of Sciences to analyze and monitor progress towards this goal. Setting a target establishes a framework for holding our nation's decisionmakers accountable to making child poverty reduction a priority and is the first step to ending child poverty in the United States.

The effectiveness of targets in reducing child poverty is well-established. The [United Kingdom cut its child poverty rate in half between 1999 and 2008](#) and before the outbreak of COVID-19, [Canada had lifted over 300,000 children out of poverty since 2015](#) after the government established an overall poverty reduction target. There is also momentum here in the United States, [with campaigns in several states dedicated to reducing child poverty](#), and [over 120 organizations](#) nationwide that endorse the establishment of a child poverty target.

The future of our nation depends on the success of our children. We look forward to working with you to reduce child poverty and improve the well-being of America's children and youth. For additional information, please don't hesitate to visit [www.endchildpovertyus.org](http://www.endchildpovertyus.org) or contact Cara Baldari, VP of Family Economics at First Focus on Children, at [carab@firstfocus.org](mailto:carab@firstfocus.org).

Signed by:

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Health Fund  
First Focus on Children  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Association of Counties  
National Center for Children in Poverty, Bank Street Graduate School of Education  
National Diaper Bank Network  
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives  
Partnership for America's Children  
Save the Children Action Network  
ZERO TO THREE