



April 13, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
Office of the President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
Office of the Vice President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

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 thank the Biden-Harris Administration for your commitment to cutting child poverty in half in the United States through the release and passage of the American Rescue Plan, and to ask the Administration to please formalize this commitment by issuing an Executive Order to establish a national child poverty target to cut child poverty by at least half within a decade.

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 child care centers are leaving parents and guardians with few options for child care 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 applaud the American Rescue Plan, which will [cut child poverty in half in 2021](#), lifting 5 million children out of poverty, through improvements to the Child Tax Credit, issuing another round of stimulus checks, extension of unemployment insurance benefit expansions, increases to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and more.

In order to sustain and improve upon any progress made in reducing child poverty as a result of implementation of these provisions in the American Rescue Plan, we ask that you formalize your commitment to reducing child poverty by issuing an Executive Order to establish a national child poverty target in the United States, as well as support passage of the **[Child Poverty Reduction Act \(S. 643 / H.R. 1558\)](#)**. Formalizing a child poverty target will ensure that we both continue to build the political will and have the policy analysis necessary to make progress on child poverty reduction beyond emergency relief efforts.

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 160 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 Olivia Gomez at [oliviag@firstfocus.org](mailto:oliviag@firstfocus.org) or Michelle Dallafior at [michelled@firstfocus.org](mailto:michelled@firstfocus.org).

Sincerely,

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