



March 10, 2021

The Honorable Danny Davis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gerry Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Casey
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Davis, Representative Roybal-Allard, Representative Lee, Representative Connolly, Senator Casey, Senator Brown and Senator Baldwin:

On behalf of over 160 organizations dedicated to reducing child poverty in the United States, we thank you for your leadership in reintroducing the Child Poverty Reduction Act (H.R. 1558 / S. 643), which would codify a national target to cut the U.S. child poverty rate in half within a decade.

No child in the world's wealthiest nation should go to bed hungry or be deprived of clean air or be without the opportunities that come from having a safe, affordable place to call home.

Yet even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 health emergency, 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. [We know that at least an additional 2.5 million children](#) are living in poverty than before the pandemic. Unemployment remains high, with many more workers underemployed and seeing reduced paychecks. 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 continued 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 are encouraged to see that [President Biden's American Rescue Plan would cut child poverty in half in 2021](#), resulting in 5 million children being lifted 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.

Passing the Child Poverty Reduction Act is critical to sustaining and improving upon any progress made through the implementation of this plan through a legislative package in 2021. By codifying a national child poverty target and tasking the National Academy of Sciences to analyze and monitor progress towards this goal, this legislation will ensure that we continue to build the political will and have the research necessary to make progress on child poverty reduction beyond emergency relief efforts.

Other provisions of the Child Poverty Reduction Act include:

- Requiring the U.S. Census Bureau to develop an anchored Supplemental Poverty Measure to use to annually track progress on child poverty that includes data on children in the U.S. territories;
- Directing the National Academy of Sciences to establish a Child Poverty Reduction Strategy Clearinghouse;
- Mandating the National Academy of Sciences to update *A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty* within three years;
- Directing the National Academy of Sciences to publish a new consensus study on policies to reduce long-term, intergenerational child poverty.

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 reduced child poverty by over a third in since 2015](#). There is also momentum here in the United States, with [campaigns in several states](#) dedicated to reducing child poverty.

The future of our nation depends on the well-being and success of our children. We are grateful for your leadership in making child poverty reduction a priority, and we look forward to working with you to improve the well-being of America's children and youth. For additional information, please don't hesitate to visit www.endchildpovertyus.org or contact Cara Baldari, VP of Family Economics at First Focus Campaign for Children, at carab@firstfocus.org or Olivia Gomez, oliviag@firstfocus.org.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL GROUPS

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Federation of Teachers
Association of Children's Residential Centers
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Child Labor Coalition
Child Welfare League of America

Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Health Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Rights
Children's Trust Fund Alliance
Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)
Coalition on Human Needs
Comic Relief US
Educare Learning Network
Every Child Matters
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Focused Treatment Association
Families USA
Family Promise
First Focus Campaign for Children
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Children
Give Running
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, Inc.
Institute of Limbic Health
Jewish Center for Justice
Juvenile Law Center
International Social Service - USA
Limbic Legacy: Neuroscience for Emotional Health
Low Income Investment Fund
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Center for Children in Poverty, Bank Street Graduate School of Education
National Center for Families Learning
National Center for Youth Law
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Children's Campaign
National Community Action Partnership
National Consumers League
National Diaper Bank Network
National Education Association
National Family Support Network
National Foster Parent Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Network for Youth
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nurse-Family Partnership
Oxfam America
Parents as Teachers
Partnership for America's Children

Prevent Blindness
Public Advocacy for Kids
RESULTS
Save the Children Action Network
SchoolHouse Connection
The School Superintendents Association
Share Our Strength
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Start Early
Union for Reform Judaism
United Way Worldwide
Voices for Adoption
ZERO TO THREE

STATE and LOCAL GROUPS

Arizona

Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Child and Family Resources, Inc.
Valley of the Sun United Way

California

California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Association of Food Banks
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Children Now
Children's Institute (Los Angeles)
The Children's Partnership
County Welfare Directors Association of California
The Children's Movement Fresno
End Child Poverty California/The GRACE Institute
Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Fresno EOC Street Saints
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin & Sonoma Counties
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Journey House
San Diego for Every Child
SBCS (Chula Vista)
Valley Oak Children's Services

Colorado

Colorado African American Drug Policy Coalition
Colorado Children's Campaign
Parent Possible
Urban Colors Arts and Mentoring (Denver)

Connecticut

Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Delaware

Christian Council of Delmarva

District of Columbia

RESULTS DC/MD

Florida

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.

Florida's Children First

Miami Diaper Bank

Hawaii

Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Kansas

FosterAdopt Connect

Kansas Action for Children

United Way of Flint Hills (Emporia)

Illinois

Children's Home & Aid

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois

Twice as Nice Mother & Child dba Keeping Families Covered (Waukegan)

Indiana

Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY)

Louisiana

Agenda for Children (New Orleans)

Educare New Orleans

Kingsley House (New Orleans)

Maine

Invest in Tomorrow

Maine Children's Alliance

Maine Community Action Partnership

Maryland

Public Justice Center

RESULTS DC/MD

Michigan

Greater Ottawa and Allegan County United Way
Michigan Association of United Ways
United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region
United Way of Montcalm – Ionia Counties
United Way of Southeastern Michigan

Minnesota

Safe Passage for Children of Minnesota

Missouri

FosterAdopt Connect
Kids Win Missouri

Nebraska

Heartland Family Service

New Jersey

New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies

New Mexico

New Mexico Voices for Children

New York

Children's Aid
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Schuyler Center on Analysis and Advocacy
United Way of Westchester and Putnam

North Carolina

Child Care Services Association

Ohio

United Way of Greater Toledo

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon

Our Children Oregon

Pennsylvania

Family Design Resources, Inc.
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

Rhode Island

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

South Carolina

SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Texas

Austin Diaper Bank
Hope Supply Company

Vermont

Hunger Free Vermont
Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

Families Forward Virginia
Social Action Linking Together (SALT)
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Baby Basics Bellevue
Diaper Bank of Skagit County
Partners for our Children
WestSide Baby (Seattle)
United Way of King County

West Virginia

Our Future West Virginia

Wisconsin

Children's Wisconsin
Chippewa Valley Child Poverty Coalition
Fond du Lac Area United Way
JONAH End Child Poverty Task Force
Kids Forward
Wisconsin Council of Churches
United Way of Dane County
United Way of Shawano County
United Way of Wisconsin