

December 08, 2010

The Honorable Chris Dodd, Chairman  
Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Dodd and Senator Casey:

We are writing to thank you for your leadership on and continued attention to the needs of America's children, and to express our support for the Children's Act of 2010 (S. 3968). As representatives of organizations committed to improving the health and well-being of our nation's children and families, we are pleased that the Children's Act would establish a National Council on Children - a critical first step in reversing the downward trend for America's children and helping to establish the U.S. as a frontrunner in improving children's lives.

The Children's Act establishes a National Council which will annually assess the performance of the United States in ensuring the well-being of children, and make recommendations to improve children's well-being. The Children's Council will help bring the needs of children to the policy forefront and generate momentum for improving the lives of our nation's youth.

The need is clear. Almost 15.5 million children in America live in poverty. Nearly one-third of public high school students fail to graduate on time, including nearly one-half of all African-Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans. The U.S. ranks 20th out of 21 industrialized nations in measures of child well-being and relative child poverty.

As you know, in 1991, the National Commission on Children approved a blueprint for national policy to benefit America's children and families. In response, Congress and the President expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit, created the Child Tax Credit and established the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We believe that the Children's Council will catalyze the next generation of groundbreaking policies for children and families.

The Act will focus the attention of federal policymakers and national news media on children's issues, generate new ideas for policy reforms that meet the challenges children face today, and create momentum for once-in-a-generation change.

We thank you for your continued efforts to improve the lives of America's children and for your leadership in introducing the Children's Act of 2010. We look forward to supporting your proposal.

Sincerely,

First Focus  
Action for Children NC  
Advocates for Children and Youth, Maryland  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of School Administrators  
American Counseling Association  
American Humane Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Anchorage's Promise – the Alliance for Youth  
Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Beckett Family Consultants  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Catholic Charities USA  
Center for Public Policy Priorities (Texas)  
CHADD, Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Children First for Oregon  
Children Now  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Home Society of NC  
Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT)  
Children's Law Center of Los Angeles  
Citizens Against Ruining the Environment-C.A.R.E.  
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (COCAF)  
Community Action Partnership  
Connecticut Commission on Children  
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
DC Children's Trust Fund  
EcoBirth  
Family Voices  
Family Voices NJ  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Healthy Schools Network, Inc.  
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
Indiana Toxics Action  
Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders  
Kentucky Youth Advocates  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
Michigan's Children  
MN Association for Children's Mental Health  
MOMAS (Mothers of Marin Against the Spray)  
National Alliance of Black School Educators  
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds  
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Association of Children's Hospitals

National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Child Development Institute  
National Child Abuse Coalition  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Independent Living Association (NILA)  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
OK Therapeutic Foster Care Association  
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy  
Pegasus Legal Services for Children  
Pennsylvania Governor's Commission for Children and Families  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Preventing Harm Minnesota  
Project IRENE  
Prosperity Works  
Public Education Network  
Public Children Services Association of Ohio  
Salt Lake Community Action Program  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Save the Children  
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Carolina Fair Share  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
TASH  
The Black Children's Institute of Tennessee  
The Children's Defense Fund  
The National Center on Family Homelessness  
Texans Care for Children  
Voices for America's Children  
Voices for Ohio's Children  
Voices for Utah Children  
Voices for Virginia's Children  
YMCA of the USA  
Youth and Family Services Network