



September 4, 2018

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Senator Brown:

First Focus would like to thank you for introducing the Full-Service Community Schools in Distressed Communities Act. This bill has the potential to influence the lives of children and save a generation from the consequences of the opioid crisis.

As an organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of families and children, First Focus has long been concerned with the ramifications of the opioid epidemic, particularly on pregnant women and children.

As you know, opioid overdoses are a major public health problem. In 2016 alone, more than 42,000 people died of an opioid-related overdose. This crisis is experienced by people of all ages, especially children.

According to the American Psychological Association, between 2013 and 2015, the number of children in foster care nationwide increased by nearly 7 percent, to nearly 429,000. According to the Administration on Children and Families, parental substance use was cited as a factor in about 32 percent of all foster placements, a rise of 10 percent from 2005. This is clearly a national crisis.

As a leading voice advocating for children, First Focus was alarmed to learn that the rate of children hospitalized between the age of 1 and 4, for opioid poisoning increased by 205 percent.

The bottom line is that children go to school with detrimental emotional and physiological effects of this crisis and need the kind of wrap-around services your bill supports to help them grow and prosper.

We appreciate your desire to help children and families suffering from this crisis. First Focus will advocate for the importance of community schools and their role in providing educational, health, and family support.

Sincerely

Bruce Lesley, President