

U.S. Child Poverty Action Group  
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Statement for the Record  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Ways and Means Committee  
Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support

“Combatting Child Poverty”

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Walorski, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support, thank you for holding this important hearing on combatting child poverty and for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

As members of the U.S. Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), a coalition of national organizations dedicated to addressing child poverty in the United States, we are writing to urge you to build on the momentum following this hearing by passing the Child Poverty Reduction Act and establishing a national commitment to cut our child poverty rate in half within a decade.

#### *The Time to Act is Now*

We were pleased to see bipartisan consensus expressed during the hearing that we all have an obligation to ensure that no child in the United States should be living in poverty, and we see this as a critical time for Congress to act on that obligation.

There is momentum to address child poverty in the U.S. – Congress has now held [three separate committees hearings](#) on child poverty in the past six weeks, all which have highlighted that while child poverty is a critical problem in our country, we know how to address it. These hearings have detailed findings from the 2019 landmark National Academy of Sciences study, [A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty](#), which models a set of evidence-based policy and program changes, that if implemented, would cut our child poverty rate in half within a decade.

And the Coronavirus outbreak has only served to confirm that action to reduce child poverty and support family economic security is more necessary than ever. As the spread of the Coronavirus has grown, the vulnerabilities within our system have become clear. Children and families living in poverty already lack the financial stability to consistently access nutritious food, stable housing, healthcare, and all of the resources needed to support a child’s healthy

development. A public health crisis only exacerbates these needs when resources are scarce for everyone.

As schools close, businesses close or reduce hours, consumers stay home, and events are canceled, low-income household budgets are being stretched even thinner and children's healthy development is at risk as children miss meals and other resources usually provided in school, and parents miss paychecks due to reduced work hours or lack of childcare.

*We Need a National Commitment to Cut Child Poverty in Half Within a Decade*

Last year, the U.S Child Poverty Action Group launched the [End Child Poverty US](#) campaign with the goal of establishing a national commitment to cutting child poverty in half within a decade. This strategy has worked in the [UK](#) and [Canada](#), and [several states and cities](#) in the United States are now replicating it by establishing their own targets to address child poverty.

We urge you to build on this momentum and take bipartisan action to pass the Child Poverty Reduction Act. This bill would codify a national target to cut child poverty in half within a decade and put procedures in place to track progress towards this goal.

We cannot make progress to reduce child poverty without holding ourselves accountable to act. Codifying a national child poverty target helps to build public and political will and serves as a rallying cry for concrete steps to meet our shared goal of no child in the United States experiences poverty.

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to continuing to engage with you to improve the well-being of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Health Fund  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
National Diaper Bank Network  
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives  
ZERO TO THREE