

September 23, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Clyburn
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet and Majority Whip Clyburn:

I am writing from First Focus on Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families a priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Legal Assistance to Prevent Evictions Act (S. 3305/H.R. 5884).

As an organization dedicated to improving the well-being of our nation's children, we know that access to stable and affordable housing is crucial for supporting children's healthy development. Unfortunately, families with children are disproportionately at-risk for eviction from their homes, and the outbreak of COVID-19 has served to expose and exacerbate this problem. Estimates find that 30-40 million people are at-risk of eviction due to the pandemic, and as of August, over a quarter of households with children were behind on rent.

Families with children who are evicted are more likely to move to higher poverty neighborhoods and experience homelessness. Evictions are particularly dangerous during a pandemic, for they cause families to move to overcrowded situations such as doubling up with others, in hotel or motel rooms, shelters, cars, or other situations that make social distancing and remote learning close to impossible.

The Legal Assistance to Prevent Evictions Act would support families at-risk of eviction by establishing a grant program for non-profits or government institutions to help renters facing evictions by providing them with free legal assistance. We appreciate that this grant program would target areas with high rates of evictions as well as regions that are leading the way in providing legal counsel to families facing eviction.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of children and families, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley, President