

October 7, 2020

The Honorable Barbara Lee
U.S. House of Representatives
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mazie Hirono
U.S. Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lee and Senator Hirono:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions, we are writing to express our thanks and support for the Women and Climate Change Act (H.R. 1880/S. 868).

Climate change is altering our planet at an alarming rate. Temperatures continue to rise, weather patterns are shifting to create stronger storms and longer droughts, and food- and water-borne diseases are inflicting even more people. Unfortunately, women and children will bear the brunt of the climate emergency, as they make up nearly 70 percent of the world's poorest populations.¹

Research has shown that women and their offspring are more vulnerable to the direct and indirect effects of climate change. In many developing countries that lack drinking water infrastructure, such as running water in homes, droughts caused by climate change will be an extreme detriment to vulnerable populations. Droughts reduce the availability of water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene; women are more likely to suffer the burdens associated with obtaining water from far distances. Not only that, droughts lead to food insecurity, and women and children are disproportionately impacted by nutritional deficiencies compared to men.² In addition to the burdens of droughts, women are more likely than men to die from natural disasters, and such disasters kill women at a younger age.³

It is clear that women and their children need protection from the negative effects of climate change. The Women and Climate Change Act will protect this vulnerable population by directing federal agencies, like the Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to lead the global effort to mitigate the impacts of climate change on women and girls around the world by developing coordinated and comprehensive strategies.

¹ <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/gender-and-climate-change#:~:text=Extreme%20weather%20events%20such%20as,climate%20change%20adaptation%20and%20mitigation.>

² <https://www.who.int/globalchange/GenderClimateChangeHealthfinal.pdf?ua=1>

³ Ibid.

Every woman and child, regardless of their social and economic status, has the right to clean air, safe water, and a healthy environment. First Focus Campaign for Children applauds your leadership on this pressing issue affecting children and families, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline under the letter "L" in "Lesley".

Bruce Lesley
President