



September 20, 2022

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Danny K. Davis
Chairman
Worker and Family Support Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
Acting Ranking Member
Worker and Family Support Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Chairwoman
Health Subcommittee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member
Health Subcommittee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady, Chairman Davis, Acting Ranking Member Wenstrup, Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, Chairwomen Eshoo, and Ranking Member Guthrie:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for 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 introducing the *Jackie Walorski Maternal and Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act* and to share our endorsement of the bill. Home visiting offers children and their families services and opportunities to improve numerous outcomes, and this vital program is one that First Focus on Children has championed for many years.

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program has supported children and their families for over a decade and has allowed home visiting to expand in states to serve more children and families. Positive outcomes of home visiting include improved maternal and child health, prevention of child maltreatment, increased family economic self-sufficiency, reduction in crime and intimate partner violence, and the promotion of child development and school readiness. Home visiting can also connect families to other needed supports within their

communities. MIECHV has lost purchasing power over its existence, however, and currently serves less than 5% of eligible families. It needs the assurance of a long-term authorization to allow states and programs to plan and to give home visitors stability in their jobs.

We support your reauthorization bill and we especially appreciate the full five-year authorization, increased funding, doubling of the tribal set-aside, the continuation of virtual home visits, and new data collection disaggregated by race and ethnicity, all of which can be used to improve equity within MIECHV for the children and families it serves. We also support the new set-aside for home visiting workforce support and retention. Home visitors, the overwhelming majority of whom are women, often do not receive competitive wages and benefits, which can lead to challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. Low compensation prevents home visitors from earning salaries that can support themselves and their families, and instability in the workforce negatively impacts the services families receive and the positive impacts home visiting can have. The bill's new focus on the workforce and its importance to the success of children, has the potential to help positively transform the way we value the work of professionals in early learning settings.

We thank you and your staff for your tireless work and leadership on MIECHV. We appreciate the bipartisan work of Congresswoman Walorski and the legacy of supporting children and their families that she has left. We look forward to continuing to work with you on the reauthorization of the MIECHV program and to its continued success.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley
President