



FIRST FOCUS
CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

January 23, 2012

The Honorable Steve King
United States House of Representatives
2210 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman King:

On behalf of the First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a national bipartisan organization that advocates to make children a priority in policy and budget decisions, I am writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 140, the Birthright Citizenship Act of 2013. This legislation would result in significant harm to our most vulnerable citizens: our nation's children. It would also undermine our American value of equality and do absolutely nothing to fix our immigration system.

Babies do not choose where they are born, and current law appropriately does not punish any child for being born in the U.S. Yet, H.R. 140 would deliberately threaten the health, safety, and well-being of every single child born on U.S. soil by denying or delaying their access to critical services at a time when all children need them most. Without birthright citizenship, even native-born families would be required to undergo a complicated process to apply for or register their children as citizens, adding unnecessary bureaucracy when a family needs to be focused on raising and protecting the life of their new child. Numerous studies show that delaying health care services to infants and children can have significant or fatal consequences, which is particularly disturbing since our country already has one of the highest infant mortality rates among developed nations.

H.R.140 would also increase the number of stateless children living in our country. Denying children U.S. citizenship does not automatically confer citizenship in other countries, meaning millions of children would be left without a country to legally call home. Around the world, stateless children often face homelessness and poverty, lack access to education and health care, and are at great risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Thus, a repeal of birthright citizenship would not only relegate many children growing up in our country to an underclass of citizens, but also pose serious risks to their health, safety, and well-being.

Our children are the future of this country, and we all benefit when our children are able to achieve their full potential. In fact, by giving all children born in the U.S. the chance to grow, thrive, and contribute to our country, birthright citizenship has played a key role in upholding the American principle of equality for every child, and is therefore a critical pillar of our Constitution. Rather than legislation that takes us a step backward in terms of civil rights and increases the number of children with unlawful status living in the U.S., we need our policymakers to focus on solutions that will move our nation's children forward and fix our immigration system. We urge to you withdraw this bill that is harmful to children and work toward laws that, instead, improve the lives of our kids.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley
President