

July 6, 2015

The Honorable Danny Davis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gerry Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Davis, Congressman Connolly, Congresswoman Lee and Congressman Cummings:

On behalf of 250 organizations, we thank you for your leadership in introducing the Child Poverty Reduction Act of 2015 (HR 2408).

One in five children in the US are living in poverty, and children continue to experience higher rates of poverty than any other age group in the US. Of all the people living in poverty in this country in 2013, 32 percent of them were children, yet children only comprise 23 percent of the total population. Black and Hispanic children experience higher rates of poverty than white children, with rates of 38 percent and 30 percent respectively compared to 11 percent for white children.

Poverty is a particularly serious problem for children, who are exposed to toxic stress and suffer negative effects for the rest of their lives after living in poverty for even a short time. Children in poverty experience increased rates of infant mortality, higher rates of low birth weight and subsequent health and developmental problems such as chronic disease. They also have worse educational outcomes with poor academic achievement and lower rates of high school graduation.

The Child Poverty Reduction Act would establish a national child poverty target with the goal of cutting child poverty in half in ten years and eliminating it within 20 years. To meet these goals, it charges a Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Poverty with developing a plan, including recommendations to improve the coordination and efficiency of existing initiatives as well as recommendations for new legislation required to reach the target. It tasks the working group with monitoring progress toward the target at the federal and state levels.

Establishing a child poverty target is not unprecedented. In 1999, the United Kingdom established a national child poverty target, which united the Conservative and Labour parties behind a goal of halving child poverty in ten years. Through a mixture of investments for children, measures to make work pay, and efforts to increase financial support for families, the British government halved child poverty between 1999 and 2009. While the UK has been struggling more recently to maintain this reduction in child poverty, the target remains legally enforceable and a point of focus.

A national child poverty target will serve as a rallying cry for the government and other stakeholders to take concrete steps to meet this target. It institutionalizes the goal of reducing child poverty, and serves as an impetus for bipartisan public debate around the most effective interventions needed to achieve this target.

Cutting child poverty should be a top priority for our country. It is not only the right thing to do, but it makes smart economic sense. Child poverty costs the US more than \$500 billion a year, or almost 4 percent of gross domestic product.

We are grateful for your leadership and we look forward to working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of America's children and youth.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

First Focus Campaign for Children
9to5
Alliance for a Just Society
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Public Health Dentistry
American Federation of Teachers
American Orthopsychiatric Association
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Campaign for American's Future
Center for Community Change Action
Center for Rural Affairs
Child's World America
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Health Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Home Society of America
CLASP
Docs for Tots
Elev8
Every Child Matters
Family Promise
First Star
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
HEAR US, Inc.
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc.
Islamic Relief USA
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
LEAnet
Lutheran Services in America
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
National Alliance of Children's Trust and
Prevention Funds
National Association for Bilingual Education

National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Social Workers
National Campaign to Prevent Teen and
Unplanned Pregnancy
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women
National Crittenton Foundation
National Foster Parent Association
National Organization for Women
National WIC Association
Network for Environmental & Economic
Responsibility of United Church of Christ
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice
Lobby
Nurse-Family Partnership
Oral Health America
Parents Anonymous, Inc.
PICO Center for Health Organizing
Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator
(Viatorians)
Public Advocacy for Kids
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
RESULTS
School-Based Health Alliance
Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Sisters of Mercy of the American's Institute Justice
Team
The Arc of Multnomah/Clackamas
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent
Health
The Salvation Army National Headquarters
Treatment Communities of America

STATE, TERRITORY AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA

Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics
Alabama Food Bank Association
VOICES for Alabama's Children

ALASKA

AK Child & Family
Juneau Youth Services

AMERICAN SAMOA

American Samoa Department of Health

ARIZONA

Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of
Pediatrics
Arizona State Dental Hygienists' Association
Child and Family Resources, Inc.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
KidSPOT
The Living Affected Corporation
United Way of Garland County, Inc.

CALIFORNIA

Assoc. of CA School Administrators
California Association of Food Banks
California School Boards Association
California School-Based Health Alliance
Clinica Sierra Vista
Family Voices of California
First 5 Santa Cruz County
Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC)
Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach
Proteus, Inc.
Service Center for Independent Life
St. Joseph Health
The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
Western Center on Law and Poverty

COLORADO

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and
Reproductive Rights
Posada
The Early Childhood Council of Boulder County

CONNECTICUT

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Jewish Community Relations Council of New
Haven

DELAWARE

Delaware Center for Justice, Inc.
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and
Families

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

RESULTS DC
We Are Family Senior Outreach Network

FLORIDA

Democratic Women's Club of Florida
Farmworker Association of Florida
Florida's Children's First
SF Voices for Working Families

GEORGIA

Kicklighter Resource Center

HAWAII

Waimanalo Health Center

ILLINOIS

Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Children's Home and Aid
EverThrive Illinois
Kewanee Area United Way
Logan Square Neighborhood Association
National Council of Jewish Women Illinois State
Policy Advocacy Network
National Council of Jewish Women South Cook
Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago North
Shore Section
United Way of Kankakee & Iroquois Counties

INDIANA

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Gary
United Way of LaPorte County

IOWA

Child and Family Policy Center
Iowa Mental Health Planning Council
Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Kingston Therapy Services
NAMI Greater Des Moines
NAMI Iowa
Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa

KANSAS

Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Children's Service League
United Way of the Flint Hills

KENTUCKY

Covering Kentucky Kids and Families
Kentucky Youth Advocates
NAMI Bowling Green
The Center for Women and Families

LOUISIANA

Childhood & Family Learning Foundation
United Way of Northwest Louisiana

MAINE

Bucksport Regional Health Center
Families and Children Together
Maine Children's Alliance
United Way of York County

MARYLAND

Advocates for Children and Youth

PeterCares House
Public Justice Center
The Family Tree/Prevent Child Abuse MD

MASSACHUSETTS

Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the
Environment
Western Massachusetts Chapter of Bend the Arc

MICHIGAN

Detroit RESULTS
Leelanau Children's Center
MI Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan's Children
Servants of Jesus
Transition to Independence Program (TIP Wayne
State)

MINNESOTA

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare
National Council of Jewish Women, Minnesota
State Policy Advocacy Network
State Policy Advocate Chair
Sherburne County Area United Way

MISSISSIPPI

Sisters of Mercy

MISSOURI

God's Will In Action
Heart of the Ozarks United Way
Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri
National Organization for Women, Missouri
Peace Economy Project
Vision for Children at Risk

MONTANA

Montana Chapter of the American Academy of
Pediatrics
Musikanten, Inc.

NEBRASKA

Food4Thought
Nebraska Appleseed
Panhandle Independent Living Services
Voices for Children in Nebraska

NEVADA

Acting in Community Together in Organizing
Northern Nevada

Baby's Bounty
Children's Advocacy Alliance
Community Chest, Inc.
Former First Lady of Nevada, Dawn Gibbons

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NH Kids Count

NEW JERSEY

Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Displaced Homemakers Network of NJ
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and
Addiction Agencies, Inc.
United Way of Gloucester County

NEW MEXICO

All Faiths
La Familia-Namaste
New Mexico Pediatric Society
New Mexico Voices for Children
NM Comunidades en Accion y de Fe
RESULTS Albuquerque
RESULTS- Santa Fe

NEW YORK

Claire Heureuse Community Center, Inc.
Directions in Independent Living, Inc.
Early Care & Learning Council
Monroe Plan
NYS Council of Churches
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
The Children's Agenda
The Children's Aid Society
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
United Way of Greater Niagara

NORTH CAROLINA

Disability Rights NC
Eagles Wings Food Pantry
Goldsboro Pediatrics, PA
NC Child
United Way of Greater Greensboro
United Way of Lincoln County

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Chapter American Academy of
Pediatrics

OHIO

Juvenile Justice Coalition

Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Ohio Children's Foundation
ProgressOhio
RESULTS Columbus
SEM Food Pantry
Single Payer Action Network of Ohio
St. Jude Helping Hands of Elyria
United Way of Hardin County
Voices for Ohio's Children
Westerville Area Resource Ministry (WARM)
Westland Ecumenical Community Food Pantry

OKLAHOMA

Northwest Family Services

OREGON

Children's Trust Fund of Oregon
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon School-Based Health Alliance
ROSE Community Development

PENNSYLVANIA

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania
Humanitarianism First
Keystone Progress
PathWays PA
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
RHD HEART Services
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
United Way of Adams County
United Way of Wyoming Valley
Upper Darby Learning Academy
West Chester Food Cupboard

RHODE ISLAND

RI Parent Information Network

SOUTH CAROLINA

Hilton Head for Peace

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

TEXAS

Embrace Texas
Greater Longview United Way
Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)
National Association of Social Networks- Texas
Chapter
Texans Care for Children
Voices for Children of San Antonio

UTAH

Children's Service Society
Utah Chapter of the American Academy of
Pediatrics

VERMONT

Voices for Vermont's Children

VIRGINIA

Social Action Linking Together (SALT)
Voices for Virginia's Children

WASHINGTON

Kitsap County Domestic RESULTS Group
Partners for Our Children
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

WEST VIRGINIA

Children's Home Society of West Virginia

WISCONSIN

Board of Church & Society of the United
Methodist Church, Wisconsin
Howe Community Resource Center
Still Point Zen Center
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice