



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

November 3, 2015

The Honorable Bob Casey
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey,

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to thank you for your leadership in introducing a bill to strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and expand eligibility for childless individuals and youth formerly in foster care.

As an organization committing to securing a bright future for America's most vulnerable children and youth, we applaud efforts to assist youth formerly in foster care as well as low-income families in achieving economic security.

In 2013, the EITC (along with the Child Tax Credit) lifted nearly 10 million Americans out of poverty, including nearly 5 million children. This credit helps families and individuals meet their basic needs, as well as assist them in building savings for the future. Yet the EITC still does not reach many at the bottom, and even for some families who are able to claim the credit, it is not enough for them to remain out of poverty.

This is certainly true for youth formerly in care, who by age 24 earn between half and a quarter of the earnings of their non-foster care peers. Most are not living with a biological or foster parent, and often lack the financial support that many other young adults receive. They face many barriers to achieving economic security, including lack of stable housing, education, and other supports.

This legislation, among other things, would help youth formerly in care by lowering the age that former foster youth could claim the EITC from 25 to 18. This would help youth who exit care and on their own – often these youth have earned income but are still struggling to make ends meet. By allowing youth formerly in care to claim the credit during the time they are transitioning to adulthood, it helps to create parity with young adults of the same age that are fortunate enough to be receiving financial support.

We are grateful for your leadership in making children, youth and families a legislative priority, 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,