

ACTION SHEET:

# URGE CANDIDATES UP AND DOWN THE BALLOT TO PRIORITIZE CHILDREN



November 5 may feel far away, but there's no doubt election season is here. Ads are running. And so are the mouths of many candidates.

We'd like you to help get them talking about kids.

When voters head to the polls in November they will choose the next occupant of the Oval Office — as well as the entire U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the nation's senators. Thirteen states will pick their governor, and numerous state and local contests will unspool across the country.

Many of these candidates will mention children. Many will kiss babies. But the truth is that when it comes to making policy and funding decisions, lawmakers too often leave children behind. The results of this neglect can be seen in the fact that children in our country are more likely to **live in poverty** than any other age group and that **one-in-10 children** don't have enough food to eat. Further, federal investment in children is only 9.8 percent of the overall U.S. budget despite the fact that they make up over 22 percent of the population. Beyond being unfair, this level of underinvestment is also cruel and unwise: children after all are more fragile than adults and the return on investment in the early years of life far outpaces that in later years.

But you can help these candidates understand just how important it is to make **real** change for children. First Focus on Children has created a **Children's Opportunity Agenda** to guide candidates in their thinking about kids and kid-friendly policies. As Ambassadors for Children, you can help spread the word.

The **Children's Opportunity Agenda** contains specific policy and funding recommendations for candidates to include in their campaign platforms or on their websites, such as:

- **Improve the tax code for children and families**
- **Cut child poverty**
- **Eliminate child hunger**
- **Improve child health and safety**
- **Combat infant and maternal mortality**
- **Improve children's mental health**
- **Address gun safety**
- **Expand accessible and affordable early childhood programs and childcare**
- **Create paid family leave**
- **Provide equitable education funding**
- **Reduce child and family homelessness**
- **Eliminate child abuse and neglect**
- **Prioritize the needs of children within U.S. foreign assistance programming.**

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## Take Action:

This month, we ask our supporters and Ambassadors for Children to contact the campaign office of a candidate running for election. Urge them to post their positions on children's issues on their website or highlight them in their campaign platform. Here's how to do it:

1. Use your zip code to find your district by searching "What is my district in [state]?"
2. Once you locate your district, search, "Who will be on November ballot for House of Representatives in [state] district [number]?"
3. Choose one of the candidates and locate their campaign website.
4. Search their website for their position on children's issues.
5. If they lack specifics on how they plan to prioritize children, contact their campaign and urge them to prioritize children and to include specific information about their support on their website.
6. Share the **Children's Opportunity Agenda** as an example of the kind of things you would like the candidate to prioritize.
7. You can also engage with a candidate's campaign (or directly with the candidate sometimes) on social media.
8. Don't forget to share your successes with the First Focus on Children team.