

FACT SHEET

THE CHILD SAFETY AND WELL-BEING ACT OF 2024



FIRST FOCUS
CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

For too long, children and marginalized youth have been “invisible” and often left out of conversations when public policy decisions are made that impact their lives. Children do not vote and do not have a cadre of lobbyists who can ensure their needs, concerns, and best interests are addressed. Consequently, on policies related to a range of issues such as health care, poverty, child abuse and neglect, early childhood education, nutrition, child trafficking, and juvenile justice, the interests of adults are more likely to be a focus and get addressed than those of children.

For the vast majority of Americans, children are a top priority, and there is a recognition that ensuring their success is fundamental to our nation’s future. Through the establishment of an independent Children’s Commission, tasked with providing research and guidance to Congress and the executive branch about the needs and trends affecting children, public policy at the federal level could be better coordinated and made more responsive to improve the health, education, safety, and well-being of children.

This is not a new idea. In fact, Children’s Commissions or Ombudsmen are prevalent worldwide, with more than 40 countries adopting such a function in government since 1990. Several states also have similar Commissions or Ombudsmen offices. If adopted at the federal level, an independent Children’s Commission would reach out and listen to the needs, concerns, and best interests of children, seek to address and prevent the array of national scandals that have threatened their well-being, and provide research findings to both Congress and the executive branch about ways to improve children’s outcomes and opportunities for success.

To achieve these goals, the Child Safety and Well-Being Act of 2024 would establish a Commission to promote awareness of the interests of children, examine how federal policy supports children and marginalized youth, and monitor how children transition into adulthood. Specifically, the Child Safety and Well-Being Act of 2024 would:

- » **Establish a 15-member Children’s Commission:** The Commission would appoint an independent Children’s Commissioner to evaluate how federal policy affects children’s well-being, monitor the development and implementation of laws affecting children, and inform Congress and the States on the views and interests of children. Members of the Commission would include a mix of different professions, broad geographic representation, and diverse racial and ethnic representation to reflect the demographic makeup of children and marginalized youth in the nation.
- » **Represent the views and interests of children and marginalized youth:** The Commission would advise Congress, agencies, and States on policies impacting child well-being, publish reports on matters relating to the interests of children and marginalized youth, examine international issues impacting children domestically and abroad, collaborate, and when appropriate, coordinate with children’s commissioners in the states and in other countries. It would also recommend specific measures for creating an environment in which all children have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.
- » **Grant the Commissioner authority:** The Commissioner would have the authority to hold hearings, secure necessary information from government agencies related to the goals of the Commission, submit policy recommendations to Congress, collect and access data from federal agencies, conduct studies on child impact statements, and ensure all reports are made publicly available and accessible to children and families.