

# ENSURING THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN WORLDWIDE ARE SUPPORTED TO THRIVE



The first year of this administration has been devastating for children living in low-income and crisis-affected countries. The dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the termination of expert staff and the massive slashes to humanitarian and development assistance have ended the premier global programs ensuring that vulnerable children worldwide survive their earliest years and grow up to thrive. Thankfully, during the last month of 2025, Congress took initial steps to reinstate one of the most important efforts on behalf of children living in poverty: a law to promote their healthy early childhood development (ECD) called the Global Child Thrive Act (GCTA), first enacted in 2021.

## Background

Led by Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Congressman Rich McCormick (R-GA), Congressman Johnny Olszewski (D-MD), and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), **the Global Child Thrive Reauthorization Act of 2025** was introduced on December 2, 2025. The goal of the bill is to reinstate the original law within the purview of the State Department, where the remainder of U.S. foreign assistance now sits.

The bill seeks to address the fact that an estimated **250 million** of the world's children are growing up with stunted brains and bodies due to the worst aspects of poverty but that many of these same children could reach their developmental milestones if ECD interventions were integrated into U.S. foreign assistance. Through responsive caregiving especially of infants, babies and toddlers, combined with health services, nutritious food, safety and security, it is entirely possible to reduce the detrimental effects of disadvantage on a child brain structure and function, which in turn improves the child's health, growth and development.

The Global Child Thrive Act Reauthorization would provide a framework for the U.S. government to continue to invest in this worthy effort on behalf of the world's most vulnerable children. Before it was shuttered, the Children in Adversity Office at the U.S. Agency for International Development led implementation of the law and was producing real-world outcomes, despite having a modest budget. The dedicated staff worked to reduce the number of children living outside of family care, either on the street or in institutions. In FY 2022 alone, its efforts reunited 28 million children with their families, an incredibly important achievement as children grow better and are better protected from harm in nurturing families. The Office also promoted healthy beginnings for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children through early childhood and parenting programs that fostered nurturing care, good health, nutrition, and cognitive stimulation of babies and early learning for toddlers in some of the most challenging environments in the world.

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The Global Child Thrive Act was passed and reported out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in December 2025 and is now waiting for consideration by the whole House. In order to ensure it is placed on the House Floor calendar for consideration, it needs members of Congress to signal their support for it by cosponsoring it. This month, we will work to build that support.

## Take Action

1. Please contact your member of Congress and urge them to cosponsor H.R. 6347, the Global Child Thrive Reauthorization Act. To cosponsor please have them contact [max.berry@mail.house.gov](mailto:max.berry@mail.house.gov) with Rep. McCormick and [sid.ravishankar@mail.house.gov](mailto:sid.ravishankar@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Castro.
2. Tell them that you support poverty-focused foreign assistance and that you want children both here at home and worldwide to be prioritized in congressional policy and budget decisions.
3. Let them know that you are concerned that critical programs supporting the most vulnerable children globally have been shut down.
4. Remind them that foreign aid accounts for less than 1% of the U.S. budget, and that you were proud that our country used those modest resources to save and protect children from preventable disease, malnutrition and death.
5. Ask for a response.
6. \*Please note, if your Representative is a Democrat, they may need to be placed on a waiting list for co-sponsorship. This is because an equal number of Republican and Democrat cosponsors will enhance its likelihood of passage.