



May 29, 2026

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Morgan McGarvey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Markey and Representative McGarvey:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, I write to express our strong support for the “Child Safety and Well-Being Act of 2026.” This legislation would take the critical step of establishing an independent Children’s Commission — and a permanent Children’s Commissioner — tasked with providing research, trends, and recommendations to Congress and the executive branch on matters of importance to children and marginalized youth.

Children and youth represent our future, yet they remain among the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups in our society. They cannot vote and do not have lobbyists advocating on their behalf. Consequently, their needs and concerns are often invisible and overlooked in policy decisions that profoundly impact their lives.

This legislation aims to rectify this oversight by ensuring that children’s voices are heard and their best interests and well-being are prioritized in federal policymaking and better coordinated across ALL federal departments and agencies – from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Justice Department, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency to the State Department.

The establishment of an independent Children’s Commissioner would provide a dedicated mechanism to examine a wide range of issues impacting children, including but not limited to health care, early childhood education, K-12 education, child nutrition, child poverty, homelessness, child labor, child trafficking, and juvenile justice. An independent Children’s Commissioner would have the authority to conduct research, gather data, and provide evidence-based recommendations to policymakers. By representing the interests of children at the highest levels of government, the Commission would ensure that children’s voices are included in policy discussions and that their unique needs are considered in the development and implementation of laws and regulations.

The “Child Safety and Well-Being Act of 2026” includes several provisions that make it particularly powerful. The bill would authorize the Children’s Commissioner to appear as amicus

curiae in federal court cases involving agency rules or guidance affecting children — ensuring children’s perspectives are represented in the judicial branch as well as the legislative and executive branches. The bill would also require the Commission to study the feasibility of child impact statements, providing Congress with a roadmap for assessing how proposed laws, regulations, and appropriations decisions affect children before they are enacted. And it would create a dedicated Director of Children and Youth Outreach and Engagement to ensure that children’s and young people’s voices are systematically incorporated into the Commission’s work.

The creation of an independent Children’s Commission aligns with global best practices. More than 40 countries have established similar bodies, successfully advocating for children’s rights and improving their well-being. Some states also have Commissions or Ombudsmen offices that help promote the needs of children. The United States has the opportunity to join these global efforts, demonstrating a commitment to prioritizing children’s well-being and ensuring their voices are heard.

First Focus Campaign for Children thanks you both for your leadership on this critical legislation. An independent Children’s Commission is long overdue, and your commitment to giving children a dedicated, permanent voice in the federal policymaking process is exactly the kind of bold action our youngest and most vulnerable constituents deserve. We look forward to working with you to build support for the “Child Safety and Well-Being Act of 2026” and to seeing it enacted into law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bruce Lesley  
President