

October 28, 2015

The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez  
2408 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Karen Bass  
408 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Judy Chu  
1034 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Gutiérrez, Congresswoman Bass and Congresswoman Chu:

We, the undersigned, representing 121 organizations committed to improving the lives of children in the United States, thank you for your leadership in sponsoring the Children's Bill of Rights House Resolution. The Children's Bill of Rights is an important step forward in federal recognition that children are entitled to basic rights and protections that promote their physical, social, and emotional well-being. In addition, it promotes access to education and other opportunities that enhance their life skills to ensure the healthy development of all children in the United States.

Currently, there is no comprehensive federal framework that guarantees the rights of children in the United States. Laws are applied unevenly across states and local jurisdictions, meaning children are often sidelined in budget and policy priorities because they don't have a voice in the system. Despite representing over 22% of the U.S. population, children's programs only account for less than 8% of federal spending. In 2014, 1,640 children died due to abuse and neglect; 19.9% of children lived in poverty; and 8.58 million children lived in households that were food insecure in the United States. More must be done to ensure that the basic rights of children are met so they can thrive and have the tools for success.

This Children's Bill of Rights covers a number of important provisions that create a benchmark for what children are entitled to and promotes the best interest of the child standard across issue areas. The provisions include:

- Ensuring that children's basic needs (shelter, clothing, food) are met;
- Protection from abuse and/or neglect, access to medical treatment;
- Educational supports and opportunities;
- Representation by attorneys and child advocates in legal proceedings;
- Prioritizing and developing healthy attachments with parents or other caregivers;
- Rehabilitative services if detained or incarcerated and protections from unsafe labor practices.

These rights are critical for children and should be recognized as such across the United States.

We thank you for your leadership in introducing the Children's Bill of Rights Resolution and look forward to working with you as you work to pass this important legislation. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Rricha Mathur at (202) 999-4852 or at [r-richam@firstfocus.org](mailto:r-richam@firstfocus.org).

Sincerely,

211 LA County (California)  
Adolescent and Family Growth Center, Inc. (Virginia)  
Adoption Rhode Island  
Advocates for Children and Youth (Maryland)  
All Faiths (New Mexico)  
All Our Kin, Inc. (Connecticut)  
American Federation of Teachers  
Arizona's Children Association  
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (California)  
Association of CA School Administrators (California)  
Auburn YMCA WEIU (New York)  
Birth Defects Research & Education Foundation  
Blueprint for Change (Hawaii)  
California Association of Food Banks  
Centerforce (California)  
Center for Children (California)  
Center for Effective Government  
Child Labor Coalition  
Child and Family Policy Center (Iowa)  
Child and Family Resources, Inc. (Arizona)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children & Family Futures  
Children Inc. (Kentucky)  
Children's Advocacy Institute  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles (California)  
Church Council of Friends Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)  
Community Child Care (Virginia)  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
Dependency Legal Group of San Diego  
Eagle's Wings Food Pantry (North Carolina)  
Early Edge California  
Easter Seals  
Easter Seals Blake Foundation (Arizona)  
Family and Children's Place (Kentucky)  
Family Care Network, Inc. (California)  
Family Services of Western Pennsylvania  
Family Voices NJ (New Jersey)  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
First Star  
Florida's Children First  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Care Alumni of America, Washington Chapter  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
God's Will in Action (Kansas)

Growing Home Southeast, Inc. (South Carolina)  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
Hawaii Alliance for Community Based Economic Development  
Healthy Family Partnership (Pennsylvania)  
Healthy Teen Network (Maryland)  
HighScope Educational Research Foundation  
High Flight Arts and Letters  
Hillsides (California)  
Human Resource Training (Arizona)  
InnerCity Struggle (California)  
Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children  
Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Iowa Mental Health Planning Council  
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Ohio)  
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)  
Ku Aloha Ola Mau (Hawaii)  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services  
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Metropolitan Community Churches  
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, Kansas  
Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, Missouri  
NAMI Greater Des Moines (Iowa)  
NAMI Iowa Children's Mental Health Committee  
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center on Adoption and Permanency  
National Consumers League  
National Foster Parent Association  
National PTA  
National WIC Association  
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ  
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Tenants Organization  
NYS American Academy of Pediatrics (New York)  
One Simple Wish  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Parents as Teachers (Missouri)  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
PeterCares House (Maryland)  
Posada (Colorado)  
Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Public Counsel  
Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center  
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)  
Rights4Girls

SOS Children's Villages- USA, Inc.  
Social Action Linking Together (SALT) (Virginia)  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (New Jersey)  
TFP Therapeutic Services  
Texans Care for Children  
The Center for Children & Youth Justice (Washington)  
The Consortium (Colorado)  
The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc. (Pennsylvania)  
The Global Justice Institute  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The National Crittenton Foundation  
The Ray E. Helfer Society  
The Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (New York)  
United Way of Garland County (Arkansas)  
United Way of Northwest Louisiana  
United Way of San Luis Obispo County (California)  
United Way of the Florida Keys  
U.S. Environmental Watch  
VOICES for Alabama's Children  
Voices for Children in Nebraska  
Voices for Vermont's Children  
Worksite Wellness LA (California)  
YDI Elev8 New Mexico