

# THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

## INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURE

May 8, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
233 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
2306 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey,

The Children's Budget Coalition is made up of over 70 children-focused organizations who collectively are dedicated to ensuring that our nation's leaders prioritize children in the federal budget process. Children are our nation's future. In almost every policy area in our society, it is possible to identify issues specific or unique to children. Unfortunately, these issues often get overlooked and children remain an afterthought.

Children have received a declining share of total federal spending for years, with that number reaching an all-time low of 7.75 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. Over the last four years, total federal spending has grown at twice the rate as spending on children. This trend signals that children are not a priority, jeopardizes their potential to thrive and succeed in life, and highlights a missed opportunity for federal policymakers to invest in our greatest asset, our children.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (PL 115-141) included some substantial increases in funding for programs supporting children. We applaud those investment decisions and hope you make similar commitments as the FY 2019 appropriations process continues. Specifically, we urge you to: **1) uphold the Bipartisan Budget Agreement (PL 115-123) by rejecting a FY 2018 rescission package and allocating \$597 billion in non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding in FY 2019, 2) increase allocations to subcommittees with jurisdiction over children's programs, and 3) protect mandatory programs that benefit children and families.**

**1) Uphold the Bipartisan Budget Agreement:** It is critical that you to uphold the Bipartisan Budget Agreement reached on February 9, 2018. This law represents thoughtful, bipartisan progress toward an orderly budget and appropriations process that will allow lawmakers to adequately fund investments in children. To carry through on this potential, Congress must uphold the agreement by:

- a. **Rejecting any attempts to rescind funds appropriated in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.** We are deeply concerned by reports that the Office of Management and Budget will propose a rescissions package that would reverse the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018's investments in domestic programs. Such a measure would undermine the promise of a bipartisan budget process. Consideration of any rescissions would seriously complicate the FY 2019 annual appropriations process, and almost certainly lead to funding delays that adversely affect agencies' ability to plan and implement programs that benefit children and families. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, many agencies are finally experiencing relief from years of inadequate funding levels. A rescissions process would halt that progress and cause irreparable harm to children's education, health, nutrition, welfare, and housing programs.
- b. **Increasing NDD spending to the negotiated cap of \$597 billion in FY 2019.** Programs that educate, strengthen, and protect children are an imperative and wise investment for ensuring the future security of our nation. First Focus' [Children's Budget 2017](#) tracks spending on over 170 federal programs that invest in families and children, nearly 80 percent of which rely on NDD funding. Meeting the discretionary spending levels negotiated in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement is a vital step to allow lawmakers to adequately fund these programs in FY 2019.

**2) Increase Investments in Discretionary Children's Programs:** We strongly urge you to ensure that allocations to subcommittees with jurisdiction over departments and agencies charged with managing programs focused on children and families receive increased spending ceilings. Of the 130-plus discretionary programs tracked in the *Children's Budget 2017*, they are funded in the following subcommittees: 112 fall within the jurisdiction of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education; eight fall within Agriculture; five fall within Commerce, Justice, and Science; and five fall within Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. We were pleased to see sizeable increases from FY 2017 to FY 2018 across each of these subcommittees' suballocations. To reverse the harmful trend of divestment in children's programs, we ask that you increase these levels for FY 2019 and encourage appropriators to prioritize programs serving kids and families in their FY 2019 spending decisions.

**3) Protect Mandatory Programs that Invest in Children and Families:** We oppose the weakening of mandatory programs—whether by reduced funding or restrictive eligibility requirements—as an offset for increased discretionary investment in children. Divestment in kids has a real and devastating impact on crucial resources for housing, education, nutrition, health and general welfare, to name a few. To ensure that all our nation's children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential, we need a holistic support system for our children and families. Many mandatory programs help vulnerable children and families afford basic needs including food, housing, and health care. These vital programs work in complement with discretionary funding streams to meet the needs of our children, lift children out of poverty, support families in achieving long-term financial stability, and improve our nation's economic health.

The members of the Children's Budget Coalition recognize the importance of using a comprehensive approach to prioritizing children in federal spending decisions. The coming months represent a meaningful opportunity for you to embrace the principles outlined here, and we stand ready to work with you.

Signed,  
1,000 Days  
AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Afterschool Alliance  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Psychological Association  
Association of Educational Service Agencies  
Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators  
Association of School Business Officials, International (ASBO)  
Boys and Girls Club of America  
Bread for the World  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Child Care Aware of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Advocacy Institute  
Children's Health Fund  
Citizens' Committee for Children  
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
Committee for Children  
Early Care and Education Consortium  
Every Child Matters  
Families USA  
Family Focused Treatment Association  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Futures Without Violence  
Institute for Child Success  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
March of Dimes  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
MomsRising  
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (formerly National Title I Association)  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
National Center for Healthy Housing  
National Crittenton  
National Education Association  
National Network for Youth  
National Respite Coalition  
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium  
National Rural Education Association  
National WIC Association  
National Writing Project  
Partnership for America's Children  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Save the Children Action Network  
School-Based Health Alliance

SchoolHouse Connection  
The Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse  
United Way Worldwide  
Voice for Adoption  
Voices for Progress  
Youth Development Institute of Puerto Rico  
Youth Villages

CC: The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
The Honorable John Culberson  
The Honorable Tom Cole  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable David Price  
The Honorable Jose Serrano