

THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURE

January 23, 2017

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Enzi and Ranking Member Sanders,

The Children's Budget Coalition respectfully requests that during the confirmation hearing for the Director of the Office of Management & Budget, that committee members ask nominee Representative Mick Mulvaney his position on (1) increasing funding for critical children's programs and (2) lifting the binding caps on appropriations.

The Children's Budget Coalition – made up of over 50 children focused organizations – strongly supports robust funding for programs that impact children's development and well-being, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition, housing and welfare. There are more than 200 distinct programs that benefit children and families and the Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health & Human Services and Education, Agriculture, Transportation Housing & Urban Development, and Commerce, Justice & Science have jurisdiction over many of these critical programs.

While we are aware of the tight budgetary environment, we are still very concerned with two disinvestment trends for programs that benefit children:

- 1. Total government spending on children in the last five years, when adjusted for inflation, is down 9.4 percent, more than twice the rate of overall spending decreases of 4 percent.** These totals include mandatory and discretionary spending as well as American Recovery & Reinvestment Act outlays. We are concerned with these disproportionate cuts to children's programs and the long-term impact they will have on the futures of our nation's children and families.
- 2. The overall share of federal spending for children is only 7.89 percent of total government spending, which is down from children's 8.29 percent share in 2014.** Furthermore, over the last five years, the federal share of discretionary spending dedicated to children has dropped by 7.2 percent. We are concerned with this disinvestment in children, which has not kept pace with overall increases in federal spending during the same time.

If Congress fails to lift the binding caps on appropriations set through 2021, the cuts to children's programs will have real consequences for real people – especially teachers, young children in low-income families, and students with special needs. The caps are scheduled to rise by approximately 2 percent per year which is roughly enough to begin keeping up with projected inflation, but not enough to also cover population growth or other rising needs of children.

We cannot continue down this path – our children deserve better. The Children’s Budget Coalition is committed to ensuring that robust federal investment in the critical programs that nurture children is a top priority for our nation’s leaders. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you in the 115th Congress to ensure all of our nation’s children have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
American Psychological Association
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children’s Health Fund
Communities In Schools
Easterseals
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Institute for Child Success
Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Crittenton Foundation
National Education Association
National Network for Youth
National Respite Coalition
National WIC Association
Partnership for America's Children
Public Advocacy for Kids
Save the Children
Save the Children Action Network
SchoolHouse Connection
Share Our Strength
United Way Worldwide
Voices for Progress
Youth Villages