

February 11, 2013

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to urge you to establish a National Commission on Children to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in America. As representatives of organizations committed to improving the health and well-being of our nation's children and families, we believe that establishing a National Commission on Children is a critical first step in reversing the downward trend for America's children and helping to establish the U.S. as a frontrunner in improving children's lives.

In 1991, the National Commission on Children approved a blueprint for national policy to benefit America's children and families. In response, Congress and the President expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit, created the Child Tax Credit and established the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We believe that a new National Commission will catalyze the next generation of groundbreaking policies for children and families.

Among other activities, a National Commission could annually assess the performance of the United States in ensuring the well-being of children, and make recommendations to improve children's well-being. In doing so, it would help bring the needs of children to the policy forefront and generate momentum for improving the lives of our nation's youth.

The need is clear. Almost 16.1 million children in America live in poverty. Nearly one-third of public high school students fail to graduate on time, including nearly one-half of all African-Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans. The U.S. ranks 20th out of 21 industrialized nations in measures of child well-being and relative child poverty.

As the totality of these data suggest, as a nation, we are struggling to meet the needs of our children and families. Now is the time for action. A National Commission on Children would focus the attention of federal policymakers and national news media on children's issues, generate new ideas for policy reforms that meet the challenges children face today, and create momentum for once-in-a-generation change.

We look forward to working with you on this issue, and thank you for your steadfast leadership and continued efforts to improve the lives of America's children.

Sincerely,

First Focus

'R kids Family Center (Connecticut)

Action for Children North Carolina (North Carolina)

Advocates for Children & Youth (Maryland)

Afterschool Alliance

Alaska Literacy Program (Alaska)

Allegheny Valley Association of Churches (Pennsylvania)

Alliance for Children and Families

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

American Association of School Administrators

American Counseling Association

America's Promise Alliance

American School Counselor Association

Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families (Arkansas)

Bazon Center for Mental Health Law

Beckett Family Consulting

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (Connecticut)

Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition (Pennsylvania)

California Foster Families, Inc. (California)

Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ)

Center for Public Policy Priorities

Child Care Aware of America

Child and Family Policy Center (Iowa)

Child Labor Coalition

Children First for Oregon (Oregon)

Children Now (California)

Children's Alliance (Washington)

Children's Alliance of New Hampshire (New Hampshire)

Children's Home Society of America

Children's Hospital Association

Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT) (Texas)

Children's Services Council of Broward County (Florida)

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (New York)

Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Community Action Partnership
Colorado Children's Campaign (Colorado)
Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) (Connecticut)
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Denali Family Services (Alaska)
Disciples Home Missions (Indiana)
Easter Seals
EcoBirth
Evangelicals for Social Action
Family Voices
Family Voices-NJ (New Jersey)
Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc. (Florida)
First Church Shelter (Massachusetts)
Forum for Youth Investment
Foster Family-Based Treatment Association
General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church
Honor Our Pueblo Existence (H.O.P.E.) (New Mexico)
Hunger Free Vermont (Vermont)
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition (Illinois)
Illinois School Psychologists Association (Illinois)
INND (Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders)
Independent Living Inc. (New York)
Kentucky Youth Advocates (Kentucky)
Kids At Risk Action
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lamey-Wellehan (Maine)
Learning Disabilities Association of New York State (New York)
Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri (Missouri)
Maine Parent Federation, Inc (Maine)
Maryland United for Peace and Justice (Maryland)
Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center (California)
Media Voices for Children
Michigan League for Public Policy (Michigan)

Michigan's Children (Michigan)
Middlesex Coalition for Children (Connecticut)
Mississippi Center for Justice (Mississippi)
MOMS Advocating Sustainability
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Congress of American Indians
National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Education Association
National Head Start Association
National Independent Living Association (NILA)
National Indian Head Start Directors Association
National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI)
New Level Community Development Corporation
New Mexico Voices for Children (New Mexico)
Northwestern Center for Independent Living
Nurse-Family Partnership
Ohio National Organization for Women (Ohio)
Packard Group
Parent Network of WNY (New York)
Parent Support Network of RI (Rhode Island)
Parents Against Lindane
Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights (Washington)
Pegasus Legal Services for Children
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (Pennsylvania)
Pentecostals & Charismatics for Peace & Justice
Physicians for Social Responsibility (San-Francisco-Bay Area Chapter) (California)

Plumas CASA (California)
Prevent Child Abuse America
Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)
Public Advocacy for Kids
Qualistar Colorado (Colorado)
Religious Sisters of Charity
Resources For Empowerment And Life-skills Center Inc.
RESULTS: The Power to End Poverty
RI Parent Information Network (Rhode Island)
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT (Rhode Island)
ROSE Community Development (Oregon)
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Save the Children
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center (South Carolina)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Central Leadership (Kentucky)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership (Kentucky)
Spirit of Youth
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
Sunshine Hope
Support for Families (California)
Texans Care for Children (Texas)
The Black Children's Institute of Tennessee (BCI) (Tennessee)
The Center for the Next Generation
The Children's Health Fund
The Children's Partnership (California)
The Claire Heurouse Community Center, Inc (New York)
The John Burton Foundation
United Neighborhood Centers of America
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
Urban PRIDE (Massachusetts)
Voices for Ohio's Children (Ohio)
Voices for Utah Children (Utah)
Voices for Virginia's Children (Virginia)
Volunteers in Medicine
West Side Campaign Against Hunger (New York)

Westside Mothers (Michigan)

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (Wisconsin)

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training and Support, Inc. (Wisconsin)

World Knowledge Bank

Youth Villages, Inc

YWCA of Palm Beach County (Florida)