



# DON'T CUT KIDS



FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

## CUTTING SPENDING FOR CHILDREN WILL NOT FIX OUR BUDGET PROBLEMS

For the first time in our history, most Americans do not believe their kids will have the same opportunities they had to lead a happy, healthy, and prosperous life. When Americans no longer believe in the American Dream, it is time to reclaim our heritage. Our parents and grandparents knew that if they worked hard and played by the rules, their kids could expect a shot at earning a college education, owning a home, and the opportunity to develop their gifts to the best of their abilities.

However, the economic recession that hit our country since late 2007 has impacted our children especially hard:

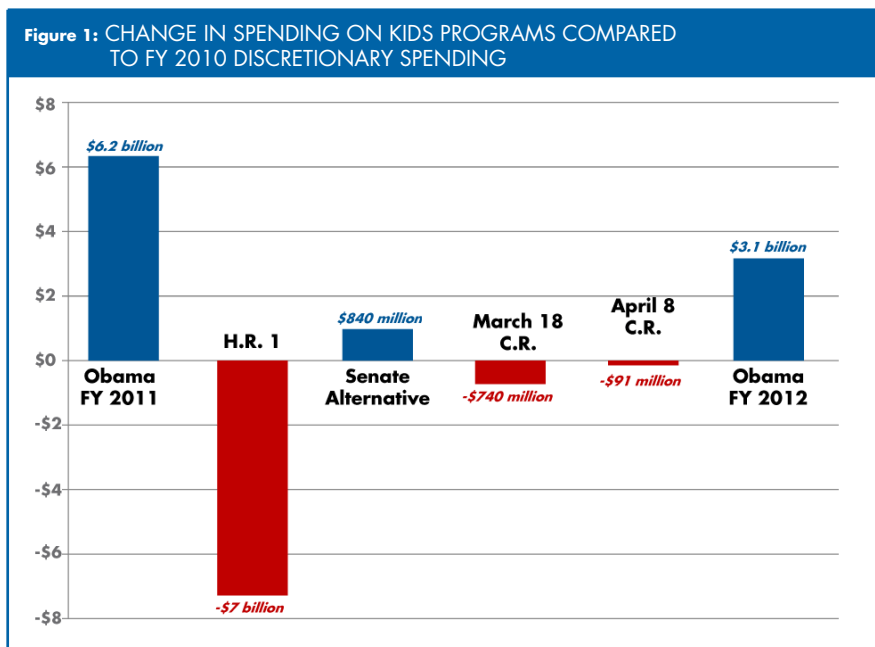
- More than one in five children is poor;
- One in four children is at risk of hunger;
- Nearly 8 million children lack health insurance; and
- The number of children with at least one unemployed parent in 2010 (over 7 million) has nearly doubled from the start of the recession.

**CUTTING SPENDING ON CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS IS NOT THE ANSWER.** There is no question that tough times call for tough measures. With the national debt surpassing \$14 trillion, our nation needs solutions that will increase revenue and decrease spending, with a long term plan to steadily and responsibly reduce the deficit. But cutting spending on programs that are essential to our children's well being – such as health care, prenatal care, early education, child care, K-12 education, child welfare, housing, nutrition – is not the way to solve our budget and deficit problems.

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAM ACTUALLY CREATE LONG-TERM SAVINGS.** In fact, cutting spending for children will not only hurt kids, it will hurt our economy, creating larger and more serious problems in the long run, with increased child welfare, health, education, and juvenile and criminal justice costs, among others. Quality children's programs save money. For example, Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate Economist, has estimated returns of 7-10 percent on high quality early childhood programs. Research conclusively shows that an ounce of prevention is worth well more than a pound of cure when it comes to our children, and particularly poor and disadvantaged children.

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**BILLIONS ARE AT STAKE FOR CHILDREN IN THE CURRENT PROPOSALS.** The graph below compares current spending proposals on children from the White House and Congress. Looking at one single comparison – between President Obama’s fiscal year 2011 budget proposal and the recently passed House spending bill, H.R. 1, **there is over \$13 billion in play for children in the budget process.**



**AMERICAN CHILDREN ALREADY HAVE FALLEN BEHIND.** Making sure that America has the most healthy, most educated, best-prepared kids in the world to tackle the challenges that lie ahead should not be a partisan issue. It is in all of our interests to make kids a national priority the same way good parents make them a family priority. Yet on virtually every index, America’s children are falling behind. Today, the United States ranks 29<sup>th</sup> in the world in infant mortality, and our children are performing below children in other industrialized nations on math and science tests.

**WE MUST PROTECT OUR CHILDREN FROM HARM AS WE WORK TO FIND A SOLUTION TO OUR BUDGET PROBLEMS.** Investing in our children is investing in America. We can follow Great Britain’s model – cutting children’s poverty rates by more than 50 percent in 10 years – by prioritizing children and maintaining that investment strategy despite other budget sacrifices and a change in government leadership. When we help children grow and succeed, we are paving the way for our country’s next generation of workers and leaders.

