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April 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
White House National Climate Advisor
White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable John Kerry
Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
National Security Council
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and Administrator McCarthy:

I am writing from First Focus on Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families a priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to urge you to meaningfully include discussions regarding children and young people in the upcoming Leaders' Climate Summit and to hold sessions during the summit dedicated to mitigating the unique impact climate change has on children.

Too often, children are left out of the conversations regarding climate change. Yet it is their futures that will be threatened by rising global temperatures, destructive natural disasters, and toxic pollution. As world leaders, we implore you to remember children while discussing your plans for a sustainable future, and identify specific ways in which your plans will benefit such a vulnerable subset of the population.

This summit is an excellent opportunity to discuss the impacts of climate change on children. It is often overlooked that children are impacted differently, and sometimes more harshly, by climate change. Children are not just little adults. Their bodies react differently to toxic environmental exposures because of differences in physiology and behavior. Children drink more water, eat more food, and breathe more air in relation to their body weight than adults. They also exhibit hand-to-mouth behavior frequently, and live and play closer to the ground. These differences put them at much higher risk of being exposed to environmental threats, such as air pollution, water pollution and toxic substances.

We hope in your planning of this event, there will be designated sessions for leaders and experts to discuss the impacts of climate change on children. They are an especially vulnerable population and in any discussion on climate change, we should consider how they will be affected.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you need any assistance or more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to Olivia Gomez, Director of Health and Nutrition Policy, at oliviag@firstfocus.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a stylized "L".

Bruce Lesley
President