



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

Female lawmakers lead the pack on protecting children January 11, 2024

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"How we treat our children says so much about our priorities...Today's plan is another important building block in the development of a manifesto that will provide the hope the country needs and the future our children deserve."

Can you guess which politician recently said this while introducing a new children's health agenda?

[HINT: They weren't American.](#)

U.S. politicians rarely put children first. So when they do, it's important to honor them. **[First Focus Campaign for Children has identified 120 members of Congress who fought to protect the interests of children in 2023](#)**, advancing bills to promote their health and well-being amid a growing national crisis of rising child poverty, homelessness, uninsured rates and even mortality rates of infants and children.

First Focus Campaign for Children identifies 40 Senators and 80 members of the House of Representatives from both parties as "Champions" or "Defenders" of children in its just released **[2023 Legislative Scorecard](#)**. The scorecard ranks policymakers according to votes and bill sponsorships taken during the first session of the 118th Congress that promote — or imperil — our children's best interests. The new report examines key pieces of **legislation designed to protect children from toxic chemicals, sexual abuse, and other dangers; provide high-quality, affordable child care; build wealth and promote stable financial futures; prevent child labor; promote mental health access in schools and address other issues critical to advancing the needs of all children everywhere.**

See the **[list of winners here](#)**.

An interesting "first" this year: Women outnumber men on the scorecard, by 63 to 57. Women in Congress have always been more likely than men to be Champions or Defenders, but this year, they are nearly **three times as likely as their male peers**. A total of **42% of all women currently serving in Congress** earned the Champion or Defender distinction compared to 15% of men.

Support for our nation's children also breaks down distinctly by region.

- **The Northeast is the Region of Champions.** 45% of House and Senate members (48 members in total) from the Northeast (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware) were Champions or Defenders of Children in 2023. In fact, the Northeast has more Champions and Defenders than the bottom three regions combined.
- **The West holds strong but continues to slip.** The Western region (Alaska, Hawaii, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Nevada) had 31% of its House and Senate members (28 in total) named as Champions or Defenders of Children — down from 34% in 2022 and 35% in 2021. As recently as 2019, the West had led all regions in this category.
- **The Midwest remains in the middle.** In 2023, 15% of House and Senate members (18 in total) from the Midwest (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri) qualified as Champions or Defenders of Children.
- **The Southeast needs more Champions.** The Southeast region (Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas) produced just 12% of Champions and Defenders.
- **The Southwest and Plains states lag behind.** The Southwest (Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas) and Plains states (Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota) had 10% of their members (12 out of 103) represented on our list.

Download the [full report here](#).



Photo by Kiana Bosman via Pexels.com

The Kid Angle is published weekly by First Focus on Children, except during Congressional recesses.



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