BE THE VOICE FOR KIDS

Save the Children 100 YEARS | Save the Children Action Network

YOUR GUIDE TO PRIORITIZING KIDS IN THE 2020 ELECTION

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Photo: Tamar Levine

Photo: Eli Murray

INVEST IN KIDS

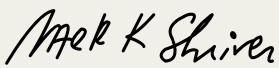
As a candidate for political office, you have the power to make tremendous change for children in the United States and around the world. Change that will last a lifetime.

While there have been positive breakthroughs for children, there's still so much more the world's children deserve. To grow up healthy, educated and safe, regardless of who they are or where they're from. To be treated with compassion and dignity when their families are forced to flee their homes to survive. To have an equal chance of achieving their dreams, regardless of their gender or crises and war around them. To access high-quality early childhood education during the first five years of life, when brains grow the most.

Children don't vote, and they don't contribute to political campaigns. But their voices and interests matter, just as much as any adult. That's why Save the Children and Save the Children Action Network advocate tirelessly on their behalf.

One hundred years ago, Save the Children's pioneering founder Eglantyne Jebb said, "Change is only impossible if we refuse to attempt it." Please join us in making powerful change for children by prioritizing and investing in kids in the 2020 election. Our future depends on it.

Janti Soeripto
President and CEO
Save the Children



Mark Shriver
President
Save the Children Action Network

SAVE THE CHILDREN

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In the United States and around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

Changing a child's life has incredible, lasting results. Save the Children was the first global movement for children and we remain committed to upholding the rights of children worldwide, because we know changing a life lasts a lifetime.

OUR FOCUS

Save the Children works in communities in the United States and around the world, making sure children are healthy, nourished, protected and learning. Through our groundbreaking work in child survival, early education and protection, we provide children with a strong foundation for the future.

When crisis strikes and children are the most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and last to leave. In times of tragedy, when caregivers are overwhelmed and under-resourced, Save the Children is there. We ensure children's unique needs are addressed and their childhoods can continue.

Save the Children works to ensure that our decades of practical experience translate into lasting change for generations of children to come. We work with policymakers at local, national and global levels, advocating for policies that will give millions of children the best chance for success – securing a better future for us all.

In 2018, we changed the lives of 134 million children in 120 countries, including more than 447,000 right here in the United States.

Photo: GMB Akash

Photo: Rachel Couch
Save the Children Action Network

SAVE THE CHILDREN ACTION NETWORK

THE VOICE FOR KIDS

Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) believes that every child deserves the best possible start in life and serves as the political voice for kids. Founded in 2014 as an advocacy affiliate of Save the Children, SCAN is building bipartisan political will to ensure all children in the United States and around the world thrive.

OUR FOCUS

We concentrate on three objectives critical to children's lives: investing in early childhood education programs domestically, helping the world's most vulnerable children and ensuring the rights of children who arrive at our southern border.

Investing in early childhood education and child care in the United States lays the foundation for success and ensures that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Around the world, hundreds of thousands of children are dying every year from direct and indirect effects of conflict. We are calling on our leaders to uphold international standards, hold perpetrators of violence to account, and take action to protect children and support their recovery. According to UNESCO, 132 million girls between the ages of 6 and 17 are not enrolled in school. It is vitally important that girls and young women are empowered from an early age and that we invest in their leadership potential so they can develop into positions of political leadership and civic engagement.

As the crisis at our southern border has escalated and Save the Children works to provide humanitarian aid to children in transit centers, SCAN continues to implement an advocacy campaign to protect the rights of children who migrate from Central America.

We work with advocates across the country to elevate these children's issues at all levels of government. In the past four years, we have expanded our staff, Volunteer Leaders and Student Ambassadors to 14 states, while growing a dedicated grassroots network of more than 300,000 child advocates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

OUR SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

HIGH 5 FOR KIDS

While SCAN endorses state-level candidates in priority races around the country, our High 5 for Kids campaign is a nonpartisan effort to persuade candidates for local, state and federal office – including the presidency – to prioritize children, especially during the first five critical years of life. Through High 5 for Kids, we train volunteers to directly engage candidates on our priority issues.

Our grassroots activists educate campaign staff by meeting with them to discuss policy options, elevate children's issues in their community by organizing debate watch parties, and engage the media to shine a spotlight on children's needs. By raising the visibility of our issues on the campaign trail and demonstrating the passion of child advocates, we seek to create a political environment that will spur bipartisan action in 2021 and beyond.

From the early presidential caucus and primary states to traditional battlegrounds and everywhere in between, our local staff and volunteers engage with campaigns on a regular basis. They are eager to hear how candidates plan to invest in kids – no matter who they are or where they were born.

Photo: Save the Children

Photo: Susan Warner, 2015

U.S. POLICY FOCUS

ENSURING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

Learning changes lives. That's why we're working to build bipartisan will and broad public support for universal access to high-quality early learning and child care across the United States. In the pursuit of equal opportunity for every child, our guiding principle is that all kids should have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early childhood education.

To realize this objective, all levels of government must work together – in concert with the private sector – to craft powerful policies, allocate the necessary resources, and provide the appropriate regulatory environment for such programs to flourish. The president plays a critical leadership role through federal funding requests, proposed changes to the tax code and providing incentives to state and local agencies to work together.

There are many proposals that would affect large-scale change to the child care system. While we are supportive of any plan that seeks to make progress on our guiding principle, we work tirelessly in a bipartisan manner on a daily basis, recognizing that the political realities in Washington, D.C. and in state legislatures across the country require buy-in from both sides of the partisan divide. At a fundamental level, Save the Children and SCAN believe that any proposals relative to early childhood education and care must address the following priorities:

Access – Access to pre-kindergarten should be universal. Early learning and care options must be available to all families with children from birth to age 5, regardless of their zip code or work schedule. Significant new investments need to be made to ensure there is child care and early learning infrastructure in all communities across the country. Additionally, access needs to be increased to critical early childhood interventions, such as child care centers, home visiting programs, and family, friend and neighbor care. Efforts should be taken to ensure that existing facilities can be improved or expanded and new programs can be built in underserved communities so parents have flexible options for care.

Affordability – Ongoing need for access to early learning and child care programs, compounded by insufficient current public spending levels, has resulted in children from many low- and middle-income families being shut out from care and placed on waitlists for assistance instead. There must be a significant increase in direct subsidies to these families so they can afford high-quality early care and education. At the same time, innovative finance methods such as public-private partnerships, changes to the tax code and successful state programs should be expanded.

Quality – In order for children, families and society to realize the full benefits of investments in access and affordability, early learning and child care programs must be high quality. This means children are in a safe, nurturing and engaging environment. Early childhood educators must have access to professional development opportunities and research-based best practices and curriculum. In addition, parents should be provided the resources necessary to make informed decisions about the programs that are right for their family and receive the assistance they need to enroll their child.

Photo: Susan Warner

Photo: Gabriele Franâ€™_ois Casini

GLOBAL POLICY FOCUS

SERVING THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Around the world, children have a better chance than any time in history to grow up healthy, safe and educated. These advances help create a safer, more prosperous world for Americans and all children. U.S. global leadership and foreign assistance play a significant role in contributing to global progress on reducing poverty and improving the lives of children and their communities around the world. At just 1% of the federal budget, U.S. foreign assistance strengthens countries' capacity to address their own development needs.

At a time of important progress for children around the world, many still face tough challenges. All children should be safe to learn and grow, but today 1 in every 4 children is denied their childhood, often because of who they are or where they live. Their childhoods come to an end due to poor health, conflict, malnutrition, child marriage, or exclusion from education. Gender inequality disproportionately impacts girls, threatening their education, health and often their very survival. And despite progress overall, we are witnessing an increasing number of children living in harm's way. According to Save the Children, 420 million children – nearly 1 in 5 children worldwide – live in a conflict zone, an increase of nearly 30 million children from 2016. At a fundamental level, Save the Children and SCAN believe that any proposals related to foreign aid must focus on girls and children affected by conflict and must address the following priorities:

U.S. Leadership on Global Issues – Around the world, children and families face escalating challenges, thus putting a premium on strong American leadership and increased demands on our foreign assistance. That's why we're calling on the next president and the 117th Congress to bolster American global leadership and continue to provide robust investments in programs impacting children around the world, particularly those most marginalized and deprived.

Impacts of Conflict – With nearly 1 in 5 children now living in conflict-affected areas, children increasingly bear the brunt of armed conflict and its devastating impact. Grave violations against children that include killing and maiming, forced recruitment as armed actors, sexual

violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access have risen a staggering 174% since 2010. World leaders must ensure that laws protecting children in conflict are upheld and that perpetrators of violations are held to account. The U.S. and other governments also have an important role to play in taking practical action to protect children and support their recovery. Education and mental health and psychosocial support are two key ways to help children heal and recover from the trauma of war and secure their futures.

Empowering Girls – Ensuring gender equality and empowering girls globally not only creates better outcomes for children, their families and communities, but also ensures our continued standing as a strong global leader in promoting inclusive democracy, human rights and equality across the globe. Countries that empower women and girls are more stable and have stronger economies. Yet, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by gender inequality. Despite comprising over 50% of the world's population, women are underrepresented at all levels of public sector decision-making. Engaging adolescent girls more in civil and political activities contributes to increased political participation and women's leadership around the world – they become engaged citizens and voters, with higher levels of ambition for future leadership positions in both politics and the private sector. We must invest in girls' leadership and civic participation as part of an overall strategy to support inclusive and stable democracies. Further, U.S. government foreign assistance agencies must maintain and implement robust gender equality policies and strategies, including mandates to conduct gender analysis throughout U.S. foreign assistance efforts, to ensure we are tackling the barriers to girls' empowerment through global education, health, economic empowerment and other international assistance programs.

Photo: Mohammed Awadh

Photo: Save the Children Guatemala

CRISIS POLICY FOCUS

HUMANELY TREATING CHILDREN AT THE U.S. SOUTHERN BORDER

Violence, gangs and deep-rooted poverty have driven children and families from the Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – to undertake a dangerous journey north, seeking safety and protection in the U.S. After their harrowing journey, these children and families are often met by even more dangers at the border – all while children's rights are severely violated. We have seen firsthand that immigration policies and enforcement procedures, including the arrest, detention and separation of children from their families, can have traumatic impacts on children.

Children, either accompanied or unaccompanied, are a vulnerable population that face hardship, uncertainty and danger during their journeys to the U.S. Any government official coming into contact with children should receive thorough child-protection training and be able to spot victims of trafficking or exploitation. Children in the custody of the U.S. government should have access to basic human needs like water, food, shelter and medical treatment. Children should not be returned to countries in which their wellbeing is endangered.

The best interest of the child should be the main consideration in all immigration decisions. This process should facilitate adequate child participation without discrimination, involve decision-makers with relevant areas of expertise, and balance all relevant factors in order to assess the best outcome. At a fundamental level, Save the Children and SCAN believe that any proposals relative to children and families at the border must address the following priorities:

Child Protection and Welfare – The detention of children, either with or without families, is detrimental to their wellbeing. Children entering the U.S. should be processed and provided with safe alternatives to detention like community-based programs or foster care. The human rights protections for children should be codified in accordance with the Flores Settlement Agreement. Children should not be removed from their families, and certainly not to serve as a deterrent to immigration or asylum. All efforts should be made to reunite separated families, and the proper social and emotional support should be provided to ensure that any traumatic experiences are properly addressed.

Asylum Access – Access to asylum is a basic human right and any policy that infringes upon this right must be repealed. Children and families must be allowed to make asylum claims regardless of where they seek asylum – whether an official point of entry, their country of origin or in the United States. These claims should be expedited through a fair and transparent process, which involves the guarantee of legal representation. In accordance with U.S. and international law, children and families should not be returned to countries where they may face violence or persecution.

Root Causes – The migration crisis at the U.S. southern border is the result of instability and violence in the Northern Triangle and Mexico. A robust investment of targeted foreign aid should be provided to address the violence, poverty, gang activity, trafficking and the myriad of other causes that force the mass fleeing we see in the region. Proactive measures like peacebuilding, investment in education and infrastructure, and anti-corruption initiatives are the only way of stopping the humanitarian crisis in the region.

Photo: R. Masseo Davis

Photo: Ellery Lamm

JOIN US

MAKE CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

Save the Children and Save the Children Action Network are committed to ensuring children here at home and around the world are the priority they deserve to be during the 2020 election. Whether it is ensuring access to high-quality early childhood education programs, calling for investment in the world's most vulnerable children, protecting children at our southern border and in conflict zones around the world, ensuring girls have a fair chance and more, we look forward to working together with you to ensure a better tomorrow for our next generation.

We believe Save the Children's 100-year legacy of changing children's lives and securing their futures, coupled with SCAN's unprecedented network of grassroots supporters across the country uniquely position us as the most powerful, most effective voice for kids.

Join us.

Photo: Eli Murray
NEVER

Photo: Susan Warner, 2015

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