

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

Save the Children and Save the Children Action Network wish to express our gratitude for your support for children, both at home and abroad, in the updated HEROES Act that passed the House last week.

We were thrilled to see the substantial support for the child care industry, and the recognition therein of the critical role that child care plays in both the U.S. economy and in child development. By including \$57 billion in emergency funding for the child care industry – \$50 billion for child care stabilization grants to providers and \$7 billion in emergency funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program – the updated HEROES Act would offer the industry a fighting chance at weathering the storm that COVID-19 has created. These provisions for the child care industry, along with the \$1.7 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start included in the bill, would help mitigate some of the devastating anticipated learning loss created by this crisis, by preventing permanent closures on the part of child care providers and ensuring that programs that can safely operate continue to do so, providing high-quality education in those most crucial of early years.

We also commend your leadership in supporting critical child nutrition funding to address rising hunger among children and low income Americans including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC), the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and other nutrition assistance programs. We hope you can build on these priorities to ensure that programs such as the Farmers to Families Food Box Program are working for rural communities where relief is needed most. To this end, we encourage Congress to set aside some portion of nutrition funding to children in rural areas in the final stimulus package.

During this crisis, Save the Children U.S. has been working with our community-based partners and school districts across rural America to mitigate the profound learning gap that children are facing. The learning gap is more acute in the communities we serve due to the digital divide and the lack of resources. While we have sought to secure funding provided by the CARES Act to address this gap, these impoverished communities did not receive a proportionate share of funding. We ask that you prioritize funding specifically dedicated for this highly vulnerable population in the final version of the next stimulus package.

Save the Children welcomes the inclusion of \$10 billion in foreign assistance funding to address the spread of the pandemic overseas, which is an essential component of protecting Americans and mitigating the impact of the virus on children and their communities' ability to survive and thrive. In particular, we appreciate substantial investments in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which will help ensure equitable access to vaccines amidst high global demand, funding to address the "hunger pandemic" we are witnessing globally, and additional support for providing water, sanitation, food security and nutrition, education, health, and protection services for children, women, and vulnerable populations.

While we continue to support an appropriation of \$20 billion in flexible funding to more fully address the immediate and most severe health, economic, and social impacts on at-risk communities, the \$10 billion provided in the HEROES Act is an essential down payment to advancing an international response to the pandemic.

A new global survey by Save the Children, the largest of its kind since the start of the pandemic, found that COVID-19 has widened existing inequalities in the U.S. and around the world, with the most vulnerable children losing access to education, healthcare, and nutritious food and experiencing an increased risk of violence, especially among girls. Two-thirds of children surveyed had no contact with a teacher during the lockdown and violence at home has doubled. Another recent report from Save the Children finds that an additional 2.5 million girls are at risk of child marriage over the next five years because of the pandemic.

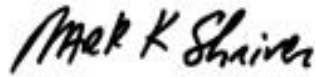
Given the urgency of the crisis facing children and families at this critical juncture, we continue to urge all parties to find bipartisan agreement on a comprehensive package that prioritizes the vulnerable populations we serve, both at home and abroad.

Thank you for your leadership and being a champion for children.

Sincerely,



Janti Soeripto  
President and Chief Executive Officer



Mark K. Shriver  
President, Save the Children Action Network

CC: The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
The Honorable Nita Lowey  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
The Honorable Richard Neal