



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

September 19, 2013

The House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Representative:

The First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan national children's advocacy organization dedicated to making kids the priority in federal policy and budget decisions, **strongly urges a NO VOTE on H.J. Res 59 because the legislation jeopardizes the health coverage of millions of children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and defunds the Affordable Care Act – imperiling the health of millions of children. The legislation also continues billions of dollars of harmful sequestration cuts.**

Originally enacted in 1997 with broad bipartisan support, CHIP provides quality health insurance for an estimated nine million children. In 2010, funding for CHIP was extended through 2015 as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). If H.J. Res 59 is enacted, on October 1st, CHIP would be cut from \$19.0 billion to \$5.7 billion, a \$13.3 billion cut from CHIP (a 70 percent reduction) and therefore imperil the health coverage for millions of children. The consequences would also be devastating to state governments that administer CHIP.

Separate from destroying CHIP, defunding the ACA would have broad ramifications for children's health including denying coverage to the estimated four million new children who would gain health insurance from the law. Foster youth below the age of 25 who were in foster care for six months or more would no longer be eligible for Medicaid, home visiting programs proven to be effective would not be expanded, and new outreach efforts to help keep kids healthy would stop. Defunding the ACA is bad policy for children.

Finally, a Continuing Resolution that funds the government at \$986 trillion locks in harmful sequestration cuts. Children and families across the nation are feeling the pain as discretionary investments that matter to kids have been cut by more than \$4 billion dollars in fiscal year 2013 as a result of sequestration. As a result, 57,000 children have been kicked out of Head Start, families are on the verge of homelessness because of housing cuts, and schools have reduced staff and services to students, particularly those with special needs and those living in low income areas or near military bases or reservations. Families depending on emergency unemployment compensation are trying to do without. This all comes on top of nearly \$2 billion in additional cuts to discretionary investments since 2010.

Investments in children have declined three years in a row and make up less than 8 cents of every dollar spent by the federal government. When more than one in every four children lives in poverty, now is not the time to pass any legislation that would jeopardize their well-being. Children are not

the cause of our fiscal imbalance, and cutting the investments that help them grow is a poor decision that threatens our future. This is why we urge you to VOTE NO on H.J. Res 59.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop on the letter 'L'.

Bruce Lesley
President