

March 5, 2014

Dear Senator,

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan organization that advocates directly to make children a priority in policy and budget decisions, I'm writing to urge you to pass the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2013 (S.1086). This important legislation will improve the health and safety of children in child care across the country while helping parents go to work or school. Floor consideration of S.1086 is expected to begin tomorrow, Thursday March 6th.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was last reauthorized in 1996. In the past 18 years, millions of children have received subsidized child care that allows parents to go to work or school while their child is in child care. But the health and safety of that care varies considerably and lack of continuity often disrupts parent's work schedules. Additionally, we have learned much about child development and how to improve child care since the last reauthorization.

It's time to put what we've learned into action. S.1086 does this by closing the loopholes that previously allowed children to be in care that did not ensure their health and safety. Provisions such as background checks, increased pre-service training, improved monitoring, and a continuous 12-month eligibility will help ensure that federally subsidized child care is a safe place for children while their parents are at work or school. Continuous eligibility also helps working parents by reducing the need to re-apply for child care mid-year when their job and income has not changed, reducing work disruptions. With a growing number of families requiring child care while parents work, this bill is an important step toward improving the continuum of early childhood services for these children. Taking this step and passing S.1086 will allow Congress to work toward ensuring that children in their early years are not only safe in child care, but are in developmentally appropriate settings that contribute to healthy development and learning, and that every child has access to these healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate experiences in the early years.

We hope that you will support quick passage of S.1086 with minimal amendments. Eighteen years since the last reauthorization, it is time to improve child care for children across the country and close health and safety loopholes that put kids at risk. If you have any further questions please contact Kevin Lindsey, Senior Director, Education Policy, at KevinL@firstfocus.net.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley
President