April 15, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski, Senator Shelby, Representative Rogers, & Representative Lowey:

We the undersigned children's organizations write to urge you to **provide the highest level of fiscal year 2015 appropriations to investments for children.**

Children and families across the nation have felt the sting of the recession and needs have increased. Unfortunately, discretionary investments for children have not kept pace. As a result of sequestration, these investments were cut by more than $4 billion dollars in fiscal year 2013 alone. As a result, more than 57,000 children were kicked out of Head Start, more families are homeless because of housing cuts, and schools have reduced staff and services to students. In particular, children with special needs, and those living in low-income areas or near military bases or reservations have been hit hardest because of cuts to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Title I, and Impact Aid. Investments for child welfare and protective services have also been compromised. This all came on top of nearly $2 billion in cuts to discretionary investments since 2010.

We appreciate your attention to boosting investments for children in the 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The increase was a good first step, however, after adjusting for inflation it still resulted in a $2.1 billion cut when compared to 2012. Overall, investments in children have declined the past four years in a row and make up less than eight cents of every dollar spent by the federal government. **After adjusting for inflation, discretionary investments for children are actually three percent below 2007 levels.**

When more than one in every five children lives in poverty, and a recent study showed that poor and low-income children now make up more than half the public school attendees in the South and West United States, a return to the status quo is simply not enough. We know investments in children make a difference. In 2012 housing supports lifted more than one million children out of poverty, while Free and Reduced Price Lunch and WIC lifted another one million as well. Early childhood investments are proven to create better-educated and healthier adults who contribute more to the economy over their lifetime.

In a recent poll commissioned by First Focus Campaign for Children, 67 percent of respondents were not confident that the life for their children's generation would be better then it has been for them. Only 13 percent believed the lives of American children are better now than they were 10 years ago. With this crisis in confidence, it is clear that we need to fully invest in our children.

Sincerely,

1. American Academy of Pediatrics
2. American Federation of Teachers
3. Children's Defense Fund
4. Children's Health Fund
5. Child Welfare League of America
6. Easter Seals
7. First Focus Campaign for Children
8. MENTOR
9. MomsRising
10. National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
11. National Child Abuse Coalition
12. National Education Association
13. National Head Start Association
14. National Title I Association
15. Public Advocacy for Kids
16. Save the Children
17. Share our Strength
18. School Based Health Alliance
19. United Way
20. YMCA of the USA

CC: All House & Senate Appropriators