



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

March 28, 2017

Assemblywoman Autumn Burke
State Capitol, Room 5150
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Dear Assemblywoman Burke:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal budget and policy decisions, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing Assembly Bill 1520, the Lifting Children and Families out of Poverty Act.

As an organization committed to reducing child poverty in the U.S., we applaud efforts to hold the California legislature accountable to reducing child poverty in California by 50 percent over the next 20 years.

Nationwide, nearly 1 in 5 children are living in families with incomes below the poverty line. Children disproportionately experience poverty in the U.S. and are 69 percent more likely to live in poverty than adults. In California, despite being the 6th largest economy in the world, it has the highest rate of child poverty in the country.

Poverty is a particularly serious problem for children, who suffer negative effects for the rest of their lives after living in poverty for even a short time. Young children in poverty face multiple barriers and when this is compounded by a lack of access to opportunity and disinvestment in communities early in life, it sets a foundation for disparately poor outcomes throughout their lives.

Beyond the negative consequences of poverty for individual children are the costs that the entire nation pays when children grow up poor – from increased expenditures on criminal justice and healthcare to lost revenue and lower economic output when our nation's youngest citizens lack the support they need.

AB 1520 is a smart approach to reducing child poverty in California that commits the Legislature to the goal of reducing child poverty by 50 percent over the next 20 years, and provides for a comprehensive framework of research-backed solutions to achieve it. Investments in programs like early childhood education, childcare, home visiting, after school and summer school programs, job training, and increases to the California EITC and CalWORKS have all proven to significantly reduce child poverty.

Holding the California legislature accountable on this worthy goal will not only help to lift one million children out of poverty, it will also provide an over 2:1 return on investment. California can set a model for the nation through this landmark legislation and increase momentum for federal action to commit Congress to reduce child poverty.

We are grateful for your leadership in making children and families a legislative priority, and we look forward to working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of children and youth.

Sincerely,