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# *The Weekly Pulse*

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NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



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Vol. 165: CPFI White House Joint Memorandum, READ Reauthorization Act, & First Focus Letter to the President

January 15, 2024

Call to Action

**The Children's Policy and Funding Initiative at Tides is collecting signatures for a joint memorandum to the White House.** The memorandum calls on the White House to make children and youth a higher and more consistent priority in US policy, programming, and funding across all US agencies. The memorandum provides specific recommendations for systemic actions that elevate young people as a US priority, highlights the importance of children and youth well-being for the achievement of many US government goals, and summarizes the impact of recent global hardships and the need to address their consequences to ensure a better future for all of us. For more information on the memorandum and to sign onto the memorandum, contact: [marriaga@tidescenter.org](mailto:marriaga@tidescenter.org).

Quick Summary

**The READ Reauthorization Act of 2023 ([S.41](#)) has successfully passed the Senate.**

The READ Reauthorization Act aims to renew a law mandating the implementation of a strategy promoting quality basic education in partner countries, with a focus on expanding access for marginalized and vulnerable groups and improving overall learning outcomes. Now advocates are spearheading efforts for it to be passed in the House. Currently, the House version has bi-partisan support of up to 52 bipartisan co-sponsors, highlighting its widespread backing. Click [here](#) to read the full Act.

**In a [letter](#) addressed to Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries, 1,098 organizations express deep concern about the potential for significant cuts to non-defense programs (non-defense discretionary appropriations or "NDD") for fiscal year 2024 (FY24) if a full-year continuing resolution is passed.** The signatories strongly urge Congressional leadership to complete the FY24 appropriations process and use the bipartisan Senate funding framework as a starting point for final negotiations.

The letter emphasizes that although vital domestic and international appropriations constitute a small portion of the federal budget, they fund crucial programs and services. These programs include scientific and medical research, environmental protections, education, nutrition assistance, diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and more. The letter warns against enacting the FY24 NDD cap of \$704 billion, as proposed in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, through a full-year continuing resolution. The organizations stress that both Republicans and Democrats have historically supported these programs due to their widespread benefits across states and congressional districts.

The signatories collectively call on Congress to complete the FY24 appropriations process in line with the previous agreement, ensuring necessary funds without including harmful policy riders. They urge Congressional leadership to adopt the bipartisan appropriations approach. To read the full letter, click [here](#).

**The Literacy Awards [Program](#) has opened applications for the 2024 Literacy Awards, featuring two new prize [categories](#).** The total prize pool is \$525,000, and up to 24 organizations will be honored in September. The Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program aims to highlight the significance of literacy promotion, recognizing outstanding organizations globally. Selected winners stand to receive cash prizes (up to \$150,000) without stipulations, public recognition from the world's largest library, and the opportunity to join a network of past winners. Interested parties can access application details, FAQs, and past winners' information on the Literacy Awards website. Additionally, an Applicant Information Session is [scheduled](#) for Tuesday, January 16th at

2 pm ET to guide participants through the application process, with a deadline set for February 19, 2024, at 11:59 PM ET. To learn more and apply, click [here](#).

## Spotlight

**First Focus on Children sent a [letter](#) addressed to President Biden, Vice President Harris, Director Young, and Ms. Tanden, with concerns about the crisis facing children in the United States and around the world.** The letter highlights issues such as rising infant and child mortality, a deepening mental health crisis, and the doubling of child poverty since the failure to extend the Build Back Better Act provision. It also points out funding shortfalls in child care, falling childhood vaccination rates, and harmful state actions affecting children.

While acknowledging the Biden-Harris Administration's positive actions, the letter emphasizes the need for further steps to address the challenges children are facing. It urges the administration to take specific administrative actions, including establishing a Child Poverty Reduction Target, proposing a plan to cover all kids with health insurance, making children a Cross-Agency Priority through OMB, creating Child Impact Statements, adopting a "Best Interest of the Child" standard, and more.

The letter also calls for the Biden-Harris Administration to continue building on regulatory actions, prioritize children's issues, and take measures such as creating a White House Office of Children and Youth, streamlining access to services, establishing a Youth Advisory Council, and conducting a public awareness campaign on children's rights and needs. Additionally, it suggests convening a White House Conference on Children, increasing data collection and disaggregation, and directing the State Department to continue providing 10% of bilateral HIV funding to Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs.

The letter concludes by urging the administration to sign a proclamation establishing the second week in June as Children's Week, drawing attention to various issues affecting children and fostering opportunities for their well-being. It suggests that "To bring attention to the issues of importance to children, the Administration could create a celebration around improving child health, education, nutrition, housing, safety, child abuse prevention, immigration, and international assistance and how these elements increase opportunities for children both at home and around the world."

To learn more and read the full letter, click [here](#).

## Events

- OECD [webinar](#) “**Engaging with education research: With a little help from the system.**” January 26, 2024 at 8 am ET.
- USAID [virtual event](#) “**2024 Protecting Children and Youth from Digital Harm Virtual Symposium.**” February 6, 2024.
- International Society for Child Indicators [event](#) “**9th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators: Global Childhoods - Critical Perspectives Promoting Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Understandings.**” February 14, 2024.
- World Without Orphans [event](#) “**Global Forum for a World Without Orphans.**” February 29, 2024.
- Center for Universal Education at Brookings event “**Global Symposium on Family, School, and Community Engagement: Building Stronger Partnerships.**” June 4, 2024, at 9 am ET.

#### Reports, Articles & Resources

- The Guardian [article](#) “**Afghan girls detained and lashed by Taliban for violating hijab rules.**”
- Human Rights Watch [article](#) “**10 Good News Stories for Kids in 2023: Despite a Difficult Year, Children’s Rights Made Progress.**”
- Borgen Magazine & Global Campaign for Education - US [article](#) “**Girl Power: Q&A with Global Campaign for Education – US.**”
- Global Child & Brave Movement [report](#) “**Justice Unleashed: Ending Limitations, Protecting Children.**”
- Human Rights Watch [article](#) “**Getting All the World’s Children Back to School.**”



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