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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. 74: Children’s and Youth Community Appropriations Letter FY23, First Focus Letter to Biden-Harris Administration, President Biden’s address at the State of the Union & Children in Ukraine.**

Mar 7, 2022

Sign-On Letter

The first-ever **Children’s and Youth Community Appropriations [Letter](#)** for FY23 is asking organizations to [sign on](#) by **Mar 15, 2022**, **COB**. This community appropriations letter is recommending the United States Government to increase funding to multiple accounts. The community is recommending **at least \$1.1 billion to Basic Education; \$30 million to Combating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage; \$250,000 to Empowering Adolescent Girls; \$5 million to Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting; \$35 million to Vulnerable Children (USAID); \$1.1 billion towards Maternal and child health (MCH); \$300 million to Nutrition; \$5 million to Violence Against Children Surveys (VACs); \$175 million to UNICEF; \$70 million to UNFPA; \$19 million to Women and Girls at Risk of Violent Extremism; and \$25 million Children with Disabilities accounts.** To read the Children’s and Youth

Community Appropriations Letter for FY23, click [here](#). To sign your organization on, fill out the form [here](#).

## Quick Summary

**First Focus on Children sent a letter to President Biden and Vice President Harris** to encourage them to “protect kids in the Build Back Better package negotiations and emphasizes that this bill is for our children, as was the focus in your original American Families Plan proposal. Build Back Better is a children’s bill— and needs to remain so.” and to “encourage you to consider reverting to the original American Families Plan title or another such name that better communicates the core benefits of this package to children and families.” Bruce Lesley, the CEO of First Focus, highlighted the incredible demonstration of leadership that has been shown by the Biden-Harris administration during this challenging time but calls on the administration to not abandon the success of the Child Tax Credits and other policies that have benefited their families.

Additionally, First Focus recommended a series of executive actions developed in collaboration with the Children’s Policy and Funding Initiative that can be taken to better the lives of children globally **including establishing a Cross-Agency Priority at the Office of Management and Budget, adopting the Best Interest of the Child Standard, and requiring Child Impact Statements**. To read the First Focus letter to the Biden-Harris administration, click [here](#).

**President Biden highlighted online safety for children in his State of the Union address**. In a press release by ChildFund, they explain that “He acknowledged the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on young people...whose lives and education [have been] turned upside down,” but noted that children were struggling before the pandemic with “bullying, violence, trauma and the harms of social media.” There have been [29.3 million reports of online child sexual abuse materials, including nearly 85 million videos](#), files, and images in 2021 alone. President Biden also acknowledged “Facebook whistleblower Francis Haugen, who was in attendance and was given a standing ovation for her courage in standing up to Big Tech. Biden stated, “We must hold social media platforms accountable for the national experiment they are conducting on our children for profit. It’s time to strengthen privacy protections, ban targeted advertising to children, and demand tech companies stop collecting personal data on our children.” The administration also released a factsheet to address the National Mental Health Crisis, which included addressing online harm towards children. In the factsheet, it states that **“The President believes not only that we should have far stronger protections for children’s data and privacy, but that the platforms and other interactive digital service providers should be required to prioritize and ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children and young people above**

**profit and revenue in the design of their products and services.”** Click [here](#) to read the ChildFund press release. To read President Biden’s factsheet on addressing the national mental health crisis, click [here](#).

**Together for Girls launched the [Brave Movement to End Childhood Sexual Violence](#).** This movement is “a global, survivor-centered advocacy movement working to end all forms of sexual violence against children and adolescents.” The movement is advocating for billions of dollars to be put towards programs focused on prevention, healing, and justice worldwide, to abolish statutes of limitation in every nation, and to develop a child-rights-driven approach to online end-to-end encryption. With the launch of the Brave Movement, they have also mobilized their advocates in advance of “the G7 Summit in Germany in June 2022 with a [call](#) for a G7 survivors council, domestic resource mobilization in G7 nations, and a \$1bn commitment to scale prevention, healing and justice in low- and middle-income countries.” Additionally, the Brave Movement also launched a Global Challenge to “develop survivor-centered national calls to action leading up to a Global Survivors Action Summit on April 27, 2022.” To learn more about the Brave Movement to End Childhood Sexual Violence, click [here](#).

## Spotlight

**Disability Rights International (DRI) highlighted the immediate need to protect people with disabilities in Ukraine to Governments and International Organizations, especially the estimated 100,000 to 200,000 children segregated from society in the country’s orphanages.** They highlight that “residential institutions are dangerous places for children – especially during armed conflict – segregated from society in orphanages, psychiatric facilities, residential boarding schools, group homes, and other institutions where they are left without the love, care, and protection of a family. Adults with disabilities are also at great risk in institutions.”

Disability Rights International warned about these issues In a 2014 [report](#) “No Way Home: The Exploitation and Abuse of Children in Ukraine’s Orphanages”, they found that “**children from war-torn areas during Ukraine’s previous conflict with Russia were moved to institutions in other parts of the country. Other children disappeared over porous borders or into temporary camps. Thousands remaining in institutions in the war zone are especially at risk of being trafficked.**” Additionally, they documented “**violence, abuse, neglect, sex trafficking and forced labor in Ukraine’s institutions. The vast number of children in Ukraine’s orphanages have families, and parents would keep their children if they could. Due to poverty, stigma, and the lack of community supports, DRI found that many parents felt they had no choice but to give up a child.**”

DRI advised governments and international organizations to:

- **Ensure inclusion of people with disabilities in all relief efforts;**
- **Reach out to institutionalized populations of children and adults with disabilities;**
- **Direct relief to family inclusion efforts;**
- **Protect families; and**
- **Support organizations of persons with disabilities in Ukraine.**

To read Disability Rights International call-to-action, click [here](#). To read their report from 2014 “No Way Home: The Exploitation and Abuse of Children in Ukraine’s Orphanages,” click [here](#).

#### Virtual Events

- Girls at the Margin National Alliance [virtual panel](#) “**Centering Girls and Gender-Expansive Youth in Policy and Practice Change.**” Mar 7, 2022 at 1 pm ET.
- PLAN International [virtual event](#) “**Will USAID localization advance gender equality and youth participation? Virtual panel discussion for International Women’s Day.**” Mar 9, 2022 at 10 am ET.
- United Nations Association of the United States of America [webinar](#) “**Girls’ Education, Empowerment and the Impact on Climate Resiliency.**” Mar 14, 2022 at 4 pm ET.
- United Nations Association of the United States of America [webinar](#) “**CSW66 Parallel Program: Addressing the Impact of Forever Chemicals on Girls and Women.**” Mar 15, 2022 at 2 pm ET.
- George Washington University Gender Equality Initiative in International Affairs (GEIA) [virtual panel](#) “**From Bangladesh to Mozambique: How Climate Change is Eroding the Health of Women and Girls.**” Mar 23, 2022 at 2 pm ET.

#### Reports, Articles & Resources

- World Vision [article](#) “**Ukraine crisis humanitarian need grows with children at heightened risk of trauma and exploitation.**”
- The Atlantic Council [article](#) “**The United States must help Afghan women and girls– even if it requires partnership with China.**”
- BMJ Journals [editorial](#) “**Disability in children: a global platform needing a well-coordinated global action.**”
- ABC News [video](#) “**How UNICEF is responding to the Russia-Ukraine Crisis.**”

- UNICEF USA [article](#) “**Children in Ukraine Fear for the Future.**”
- World Vision [spotlight](#) “**Ukraine crisis aid worker: Embracing refugees at Romania’s border.**”
- Protection Cluster Ukraine [report](#) “**Ukraine Response Protection Snapshot, 25 February- 1 March 2022.**”
- UNICEF [article](#) “**The Situation of Children and Young People in Indonesian Cities.**”



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