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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

URGE PRESIDENT OBAMA AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DEBT CEILING NEGOTIATIONS

Dear Colleague,

With so many of our children and youth bearing the brunt of our nation's economic hardship, policy leaders must consider the collective impact on our children when making spending and revenue choices. I ask you to join me in writing the President, Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, and Republican Leader McConnell to ask them to hold children and youth harmless in the debt limit negotiations.

Children make up a quarter of our nation's population, and they form the foundation of our nation's future. They also are some of our most vulnerable citizens. Currently, 1 in 4 children relies on food stamps, 8 million children lack health insurance, 1.3 million students drop out of school every year, about 2.9 million children with special health care needs rely on Medicaid and CHIP as their primary source of health care coverage, half of all black children and nearly two-thirds of low-income black children are covered by Medicaid, 43% of families with children report struggling to afford stable housing, and the poverty rate for children is approaching 25%, the largest generation to grow up in hard times since the depression.

As August 2nd quickly approaches and we debate raising the debt ceiling and the economic future of our nation, we must not forget about those who will be called on to create our future prosperity. If children are a national priority, we need to understand whether our spending and revenue choices disproportionately harm or protect them. If we do not raise the debt ceiling, we know the effects for children and families will be catastrophic. We also know that deficit reduction cannot and should not be accomplished on the backs of children. Already, spending on children makes up less than 10% of total federal spending. A cut from this small slice will barely dent the deficit while having dire consequences for the people who need a helping hand. Americans oppose balancing the budget on the backs of children and youth. In polling, voters overwhelmingly reject major cuts to K-12 education, child nutrition, CHIP, Medicaid, Head Start, and college student loans.

Children are one of our most vulnerable groups of citizens. It is in our nation's best interest to raise the healthiest, most educated, best-prepared children in the world for the challenges ahead. That is why I ask you to join me in asking the President and Congressional Leaders to hold children harmless in any deal to raise the debt ceiling. For more information or to sign on to the letter, please contact Jill Hunter-Williams at Jill.Hunter-Williams@mail.house.gov or 202-225-5006.

Sincerely,

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress