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Keeping Children – and the Future – at the Forefront of the Agenda in the 119th Congress

As you prepare to begin the 119th Congress, UNICEF USA – a strictly nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization backed by individual constituents, corporate partners, faith-based and other non-governmental organizations, and high school and college students across the U.S. – urges you to prioritize policies and resources to help ensure that every child can survive and thrive.

In far too many places, children and young people are faced with consequences of problems they did not cause. UNICEF is often the first, and in many cases, the *only*, organization that can reach children in crisis scenarios with lifesaving aid. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF’s global mission as the world’s leading voice for – and with – children and also advocates for policies that improve outcomes for children here in the U.S.

In formulating your agenda for the 119th, we ask that you consider the actions below to help shape the future for today’s children and generations to come.

- **Support UNICEF:** For decades, UNICEF has been supported with *bipartisan* U.S. leadership. With this partnership, more children are surviving today than ever before.
- Your support of the U.S. government’s *voluntary* contribution to UNICEF’s core resources in a fully

funded **State and Foreign Operations** (SFOPs) appropriations bill will resonate with millions of American constituents who are also committed to uplifting children. Public sector funding can spark investment from others, resulting in a multiplier effect. In 2023, UNICEF USA raised over \$850 million in contributions from hundreds of thousands of individual and corporate donors from across the U.S. to leverage U.S. government funds.

- This voluntary contribution provides flexible funding to UNICEF in working with local organizations, national governments and other partners to directly support children when and where help is needed most.
- **Address Child Protection and Child Poverty:** Both in the U.S. and globally, support policies that impact the future, especially as they relate to addressing **child poverty** and **child protection**.

- Prioritizing children’s basic needs, and ensuring emergency aid reaches them in times of crisis, helps children to have a fair start and fosters goodwill and resilience. It also yields practical returns; according to global and domestic research, a \$1 investment in children and their wellbeing yields a ten-fold societal return.
- Globally, **support humanitarian aid**, including through the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) accounts. Back **development** including global health (GHP) and other programs funded through Development Assistance (DA) and the Economic Support Fund (ESF) in **SFOPs** appropriations. Support programs to prevent and treat malnutrition through **SFOPs and Agriculture** appropriations. Tackle the global learning crisis by **reauthorizing the READ Act** to increase [equitable access to education](#) for children in low- and middle-income countries.
- Domestically, support programs and funding – including through Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations and Agriculture-FDA appropriations – **that increase access to affordable early care, education, and nutrition**, including the expanded Child Tax Credit, Head Start and Early Head Start, school-based breakfast and lunch programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program for Children (Summer EBT).
- Call for [greater investment in quality accessible mental health services](#) to support the well-being of children and adolescents globally and in the U.S.
- **Youth Engagement:** Keep children’s rights and needs at the center of your decision-making and invite their engagement in the process; as soon-to-be or new voters, [they want to be heard](#).



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- Please contact us if you would like to connect with youth leaders from UNICEF USA’s National Youth Council, NextGen board, or high school or college clubs. We can also share how U.S. communities can work in partnership to create stronger communities for every child.

The biggest challenges of our time have the potential to be the greatest legacies of the people who solve them. We look forward to working with you and your staff to shape efforts that promote peace, opportunity, and partnership for all children and for our shared future.

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Scan the QR code, or visit us at [unicefusa.org/how-help/advocate/how-we-work](https://www.unicefusa.org/how-help/advocate/how-we-work)

For questions or to connect, contact us at advocacy@unicefusa.org.