



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

As you work to resolve end of year priorities and the budget, we encourage you to keep in mind the needs of families with young children. Specifically, we urge Congress to:

1. Reauthorize the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV),
2. Reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and
3. Significantly increase funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) as part of a final appropriations agreement.

We recently teamed up to chair the Bipartisan Policy Center's Early Childhood Initiative because we think few policy challenges are more important to our nation's future than helping families ensure their children can get the strong start they need to grow into successful, productive adults. In our recent report, [A Bipartisan Case for Early Childhood Development](#), we offer several recommendations, including reauthorizing the MIECHV program for five years at least at current funding levels and doubling the CCDBG for children 0 to 5.

In endorsing MIECHV's swift reauthorization, we reinforce a long history of bipartisan support for this critical, evidence-based program to support young children and their families. As you know, MIECHV funding has been used with considerable success to incentivize states, territories, and tribal entities to develop and implement evidence-based voluntary home visiting programs that are reaching a growing number of families in recent years. CHIP is another program that enjoys bipartisan support and provides critical help to children. Since enactment of CHIP two decades ago, the rate of uninsured children has fallen to an all-time low of 4.5 percent. And, today, the program – through a productive federal-state partnership – covers 9 million children and pregnant women.

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Finally, expanding CCDBG resources is an effective and efficient mechanism for ensuring that scarce federal dollars are delivered directly to families who need it most. The cost of child care has emerged as a major challenge and for many working families, child care is not a luxury. It is a basic necessity – and often an expensive one. In families with young children, child care costs are often one of the largest items in the household budget.

We are confident that bipartisan support exists to support families with young children – both through continuing the home visiting program and making child care more accessible to working parents. We urge Congress to act on these issues expeditiously.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'George Miller'.

George Miller
Former U.S. Representative, California

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rick Santorum'.

Rick Santorum
Former U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran and Ranking Member Patrick Leahy; House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Nita Lowey; Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch and Ranking Member Ron Wyden; House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and Ranking Member Richard Neal

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