



For Immediate Release

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Americans to Congress: Invest More, Not Less, in Children, Youth & Families
79 percent of Americans favor increasing funds for children's healthcare, nutrition & education

Washington, DC, Oct. 21—A national public opinion poll released today by the Children's Leadership Council finds strong support for investing in effective programs that improve the lives of children and youth across the age spectrum, from birth to adulthood.

A solid majority of Republicans (59 percent) join with overwhelming majorities of independents (82 percent) and Democrats (93 percent) in calling on Congress to make children's programs and services a higher budget priority. By a strong 18-point margin, Americans say that increasing funding for children's health, education and well-being should be a higher priority today than reducing taxes.

The Children's Leadership Council (CLC)—a nonpartisan coalition of nearly 60 of the nation's leading child and youth advocacy organizations—commissioned the poll. Hart Research Associates, a strategic research firm, conducted telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of over 800 Americans age 18 and older. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percent.

Among the findings: 61 percent of Americans believe children would be better off if government did more for children rather than "got out of the way." A majority (52 percent) of poll respondents who are registered voters said they would be more likely to support a candidate who favored increasing funding for programs and services to address children's needs, with 10 percent saying they would be less likely to favor such a candidate.

"Our nation must be one in which the place where a child starts out does not dictate where she ends up," said Randi Carmen Schmidt, executive director of the Children's Leadership Council. "A child who has grown up in poverty can make it out of poverty, and an abused child can heal from the abuse—but they cannot do it on their own. Nor should they be expected to. This is why elected officials have an obligation to support, protect and defend programs that invest in and assist children, youth and their families. Americans are asking for no less."

These findings come as the nation continues to experience a slow recovery marked by stagnant wages, rising costs and unprecedented economic inequality. Children and young people face serious challenges: Nearly one in five children and young adults in our country live in poverty, and many more live just above the poverty line, according to the Census Bureau.

The new poll results indicate that the majority of Americans believe that effective government supports are essential for helping families navigate today's economy. The data support this: Census Bureau numbers released this month show that federal investments do work to improve child and youth well-being. Federal anti-poverty programs like SNAP (formerly "food stamps"), the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit lifted more than 6 million children out of poverty in 2013.

"Investing in children is one of the best choices our nation can and should make. All children deserve to be healthy and well-nourished and have the supports they need to learn, grow and thrive. Americans recognize this important fact, and Congress should too," said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and chair of the Board of Directors of the CLC.

Also notable: When it comes to supporting vulnerable populations, Americans reject rhetoric that pits children's needs against those of seniors, or holds that we cannot invest in youth well-being and at the same time protect programs like Medicaid and Social Security. Sixty-three percent of Americans say the U.S. would support seniors by investing *more* in children, not cutting programs for kids, because "the best way to provide a secure retirement [for seniors] is to ensure that we have productive workers contributing to the economy in the future."

"This generational question is an important one," said Guy Molyneux, partner at Hart Research Associates. "There is a lot of rhetoric about a 'generational war' between children and seniors, and it's only going to increase as baby boomers retire. The data here show that this war is largely manufactured. Americans reject the idea that a choice must be made between populations. There's a shared interest in investing in children *and* seniors, and a belief that investing in kids is a means to ensure a healthy economy for those retiring."

Additional information and the full poll results and methodology are available on the CLC website: bit.ly/CLCpoll.

About the Children's Leadership Council

The Children's Leadership Council (CLC) is a nonpartisan coalition of children's advocacy organizations. It is the only national children's coalition solely dedicated to supporting investments in our nation's children and youth, from birth to adulthood. Collectively, CLC's members have affiliates, partners and members in every state in the nation.

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