

May 5, 2022

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of 52 national, state, and local organizations that serve survivors of domestic violence, work to prevent child abuse and organizations concerned with children's wellbeing, we write to urge you to expand access to child care in the upcoming economic recovery package and ensure it is available to families impacted by violence and abuse. While Congress has worked to improve the affordability and availability of child care, consideration for the unique needs of survivors of domestic violence has often been missing from those conversations. In addition, child care is critical to reducing child abuse and child fatalities experienced by children who may sometimes be left in an unsafe situation for lack of child care. By understanding and addressing the important role child care plays in reducing domestic violence and child abuse, Congress can truly save lives while also strengthening our economy and growing our workforce.

Affordable child care allows domestic violence survivors to work and finish school. One of the main reason survivors of domestic violence aren't able to leave an abusive partner is they can't afford it. Without the ability to financially support themselves or their children, survivors are often forced to remain in abusive relationships. One of the major budget items that's keeping them in danger is the cost of child care. Affordable child care alleviates a financial burden and helps create the freedom to leave an abusive situation. Additionally, affordable child care helps survivors maintain, or even excel within, their employment and/or remain in school. It is vital for survivors of domestic violence and those at risk for abuse or neglect to have access to affordable, reliable and flexible child care options.

Reliable child care helps survivors balance work and family responsibilities. One of the unique challenges' survivors face is child care sabotage from their abusive partners. While not all survivors face this issue, many have stated their abuser has used child care to keep them from attending work or school or forcing them to leave early or arrive late. Child care sabotage can take many forms but it commonly looks like an abuser promising to take the kids to day care and refusing at the last minute or a flat-out refusal to help in any way with transporting the child to and from their child care. This is why it is paramount survivors have access to reliable child care options and it is essential Congress prioritizes reliability when drafting child care legislation or funding child care proposals.

Flexible child care allows abuse survivors to leave children with safe caregivers. Survivors lives don't always fall into the 9-5 working world. Some work multiple jobs, take early morning or late-night shifts, or attend school at night. Sadly, there are countless stories of survivors who were forced to leave their child with abusive partners or in a potentially unsafe situation because there wasn't any [other child care option](#). Additionally, many survivors face unique challenges when abusers intentionally sabotage child care as part of their abuse or to make their partner more financially dependent on them.

For these reasons, when drafting child care legislation or funding child care proposals, it is essential that Congress incentivize and fund child care that is affordable, high quality and available during non-traditional hours or on an emergency basis. For additional information about the role of child care in creating safety for victims of domestic violence and reducing child abuse, please see:

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/child-care-as-a-domestic-violence-issue/>

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter. Should you have any questions related to this letter and the accompanying document, please reach out to Kiersten Stewart, kstewart@futureswithoutviolence.org, or Kate Miceli at kmiceli@futureswithoutviolence.org.

Sincerely,

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

American Association of University Women

Apna Ghar, Inc. (Our Home)

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

Cairo Women's Shelter, Inc.

Caminar Latino-Latinos United for Peace and Equity

Center for Law and Social Policy

Child Care Law Center

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Crisis Center Foundation

Esperanza United (Formerly Casa de Esperanza National Latin@ Network)

Family Justice Center of St. Joseph County

Futures Without Violence

Greater Boston Legal Services

Guardian Angel Community Services

Harbor House

Hispanic Federation

Hope of Ogle County

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Ipas Partners for Reproductive Justice

Jewish Women International

Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund

Los Angeles LGBT Center

Metropolitan Family Services

MomsRising

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

National Council of Jewish Women

National Network to End Domestic Violence

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

National Women's Law Center

Neopolitan Lighthouse

New Jersey Citizen Action

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Parent Voices CA

Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)

Ready for School, Ready for Life

RESULTS

Safe Journeys

San Diego for Every Child

Secure Survivors

Survivors for Just Systems

Tahirih Justice Center

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC)

The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence

Ujima Inc., The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community

ValorUS

Women's Law Project

YWCA USA

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