



Dear Senator {Last Name},

Children's Defense Fund (CDF) envisions a nation where marginalized children flourish, leaders prioritize their well-being, and communities wield the power to ensure they thrive. The House-passed budget reconciliation package poses a grave threat to making that vision a reality. So, we are calling on you and your colleagues in the Senate to consider and pass a package that centers the needs of children and families.

If enacted, the House package would cause lasting harm. It proposes deep cuts to programs that provide families with access to health care, food, and financial stability. At a time when more than 11 million children are living in poverty—including three million under the age of 5, we should be working to strengthen these supports, not weaken them. Unfortunately, you are currently considering a package that prioritizes the financial health of corporations over the well-being of children and youth.

Basic needs programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Child Tax Credit, and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) are not optional; they are essential. If this bill becomes law:

- Nearly 200 rural hospitals in 34 states would be at immediate risk of closure due to Medicaid cuts, destabilizing entire communities and leaving children without vital access to health care;
- Three million households could lose food assistance, and 18 million children could lose access to free school meals due to SNAP cuts; and
- Approximately 20 million children in working families would receive less than the full Child Tax Credit (\$2,500 per child) they deserve.

We urge the Senate to reject the House bill and any proposal to defund basic needs programs that children and families across America rely on every day. This bill would fund mass deportations that would traumatize more than 5.8 million children and separate families. It would dismantle legal protections for immigrant children to allow indefinite detention and harmful screening and deportation processes. It would also eliminate legal representation and other support services, leaving unaccompanied immigrant children in danger of trafficking and exploitation.

This budget reconciliation process has presented a test of our nation's character. As Children's Defense Fund engages Senate offices directly to help bring moral clarity into focus, we are mobilizing young people, families, faith leaders, and communities across the country to do the same. We call on the Senate to consider bipartisan legislation that protects basic needs programs and not corporate tax breaks; removes unnecessary work requirements in programs like SNAP and Medicaid that can prevent eligible families from accessing essential assistance they qualify for; and fully funds Medicaid, SNAP, CHIP, SSBG, and the Child Tax Credit.

We stand ready to converse and work alongside you and all leaders committed to a future where every child in every community has what they need to thrive.

For our children,

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson
President & CEO