

**THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN CHILD:
SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

EXAMINING THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN CHILD, FOCUSING ON
SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

NOVEMBER 18, 2010

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:34 a.m. in Room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher J. Dodd, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Dodd, Alexander, Mikulski, Reed, Sanders, Casey, Hagan, and Bennet.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DODD

Senator DODD. The committee will come to order. Will my witnesses join the witness table this morning?

I want to welcome all our guests here this morning, as well as our witnesses, and our colleagues, obviously, and our staffs.

We've got everyone together here? There you go. You're right there. Helen, you're right next to—Helen, sit down. Come on.

[Laughter.]

Helen and I have known each other an awful long time. We talk that way to each other. She used to tell me to sit down all the time.

Ms. BLANK. I always told you what to do.

Senator DODD. There, you go.

Well, again, thank you all for being here this morning. I appreciate it very, very much.

This is the last in a series of four hearings the subcommittee has held over the last year on the status of the American child; and this will be the last of those hearings. I'm very grateful to my colleagues who are here, as well as our witnesses who will give us their thoughts this morning on this most compelling of issues.

Lamar Alexander, my good friend, is with us as well. We've done a lot of things together here over the years.

I recall very vividly several years ago, a report, I think out of a children's hospital in Tennessee, talking about the condition of that child, maybe the first generation—and you correct me if I'm wrong—but the first generation of American children who may not live as well, or as long, or as healthy as their parents after the 220-year history of our country.

This morning I'll make some brief opening comments. I'll turn to Senator Alexander for any comments. We don't have a huge gathering of colleagues here this morning, for all the obvious reasons,

but I'll turn to my two colleagues who are here as well, if they have any brief opening comments they'd like to make; and then we'll turn to our witnesses who are here, a very distinguished panel of witnesses who have dedicated their lives in many, many ways to the issue of the condition of the American child.

Then we'll have some good questions and a good conversation about what steps we ought to be taking.

I'd like to thank all of you for being with us this morning. I would especially like to thank our distinguished panel of witnesses, and I look forward to their testimonies.

You know, this is the fourth, as I said a moment ago, and final hearing in a series of hearings that I've held in this subcommittee over the last year to examine the state of the American child. This will be the last hearing that I'll chair in the Health Committee. It is fitting that I end my career in this committee on the most rewarding subject matters I've been engaged in for 30 years, and that is the condition of the American child and their families; those affecting children, their families and their futures.

This subcommittee has been able to lead efforts to increase the well-being of our most vulnerable population; and I truly hope that the work of this subcommittee continues in the next Congress, as I'm confident it will.

The subcommittee on children and families has been a vital forum for focusing on the needs of children, and is the only body in the U.S. Senate that has this as its sole focus. This subcommittee has held many titles over the years, including the Subcommittee on Children and Human Development, the Subcommittee on Children and Youth, the Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism; however, I think the current title, Children and Families, is the most appropriate, and it indicates where our focus needs to be, on children and on their families.

We've learned a lot over the last year, through this series of hearings, about the state of our children. We've heard from national experts, the Federal agencies that house children's programs, State leaders on children's issues, and programs at the State level that are actively working and making a difference improving the lives of our children, as well.

Unfortunately, much of what we've heard this year has painted a sobering picture; and I think all of us are aware of the struggles of our children and their families. We've learned that 17 percent of America's children are obese, that more than 80 percent of fourth graders are eligible for a free lunch—in fact, scored below the proficient reading levels, as well, and that more than one in five children lives in poverty, which is the highest rate since 1996.

The recession, of course, has made the already difficult lives of millions of children and their families even harder. An estimated 8.1 million children under the age of 18 live in families with an unemployed parent. Approximately 43 percent of families with children report that they are struggling to afford stable housing. And nearly one in four children in our Nation relies on food stamps for nutrition.

Unfortunately, we've become too accustomed to hearing these statistics, but in my strong opinion we cannot become numb to them. Each of these numbers represents a real child; it represents

hunger, homelessness, or suffering. And as a father of two young children, I find this morally offensive, and so should we all.

Despite this dim outlook, we know from history that it is possible to address these seemingly enormous problems. We've made headway on improving children's lives in the past, and I believe very firmly we can do again.

In January 1964 Lyndon Johnson declared the War on Poverty and asked Sargent Shriver to lead the effort to head the Office of Economic Opportunity. Sarge Shriver appointed Dr. Robert Cooke, a pediatrician at Johns Hopkins University, to head a steering committee of 13 specialists, including Dr. Ed Zigler, to identify what should be done for young children. That steering committee issued the Cooke Memorandum, which supported the creation of Project Head Start.

When President Johnson introduced Head Start as part of the War on Poverty, he said that 5-year-olds are the inheritors of poverty and not its creators; and unless we act, these children, he said, will pass it onto the next generation like a family birthmark.

Passing this birthmark has gone on for far too long. It's time to, again, put a very specific and targeted focus on our children and the future of our world.

Head Start, Early Head Start have now served 27 million children and their families since 1965 in its creation, providing young children and low-income families with comprehensive early education, health, nutrition, child care and social services.

Over 20 years ago a National Commission on Children was established which laid out a plan to address the needs of children. Out of that effort came recommendations for the creation of several vital programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

With more than one in five children living in poverty in the early 1990s various policies enacted under the Clinton administration, with the support of many, in a bipartisan basis in Congress, helped reduce the child poverty rate by more than 25 percent in our country. That rate is, obviously, still too high. But no one can argue about the difference the child's tax credit, the work initiatives and expanded health insurance for low-income children made in the lives of millions and millions of our young Americans.

Our children are clearly in crisis, we all know that. As each of our witnesses in these hearings over the past year has told us. However, we've seen how a focused and concerted effort to care for these children most in need can work and produce results.

We must do this again, and now is the time to do it.

That is why today my colleague, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, who's with us, and I, will introduce a bill establishing a new, permanent National Council on Children. We need a body that regularly and closely examines the needs of American children and their families, and identifies solutions to improve their lives.

There's a lot of talk in this community, obviously, about reducing the deficit. We all understand that. And children's programs can seem like some of the easiest to cut, as they often have been. But now is not the time, in my view, to cut these critical ideas and programs that have proven over, and over again how effective they can be in working for children and their families to see that they get

back on their feet again. Investing in children and people makes sound business sense and will produce substantial savings, in my view, in the future.

We will never, in my view, cut the deficit—in fact, the long-term deficit, without investing in the next generation of Americans. And we cannot possibly expect to see any of the statistics I've just listed turn around unless we focus our efforts toward doing just that.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about what needs to be done, in the future, to reverse the existing downward trends which are so troubling, and that is occurring in our Nation's communities.

As all of you know I'll not be here next year, but I intend to continue, in one way or another, fighting on behalf of our children and their families in the days ahead. And I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

With that, Senator Alexander, the floor is yours.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ALEXANDER

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks, Chris. I'm here today to pay my respects to the witnesses, and to thank you for coming. It's a very distinguished group. I'm especially glad to see my friend, David Satcher from Nashville, who has now escaped to Atlanta for a while, but we're glad to see him.

I especially want to use this occasion to thank Chris Dodd for his career and his focus on children and families. We're going to miss Chris' infectious congeniality, and his hard work, and his good humor—he's an extraordinarily good legislator.

He's had a focus here, and it's been on children and families, and that focus, even though there are many different ideas about how to get where we want to go, has always been unwavering. I thank him for that, and I thank him for his focus on these four hearings that emphasize that.

I have other hearings this morning I'm going to have to attend. I'm reading all the testimony, but I wanted to make sure I was here to say that, and to thank the witnesses.

We have worked together, as he said, on important issues. A lot of this can be bipartisan; the Preemie Act is one, to try to understand why so many babies are born prematurely; we really don't know that. The more we knew about that, the more we could do about it.

We worked on School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act. It ended up in a bill I didn't support, but I still liked the proposal. That sometimes happened here.

Senator Dodd has a personal interest in the Food Allergy Legislation, which is part of a legislation currently being debated on the Senate floor today. We worked together on that to try to come up with legislation that respected the responsibilities of States and the responsibility of families.

Some of the best work, I think, was done on Head Start. It's maybe our most popular program. It's amazing to think about Head Start envisioned by a president who was once a first-grade teacher in Cotulla, TX. I know Cotulla, TX pretty well; and it's a great American story to think of someone going from teaching first-

grade there to the Presidency of the United States—and then this program.

We strengthened Head Start, I believe, and included within the new authorization Centers of Excellence, to focus on the Head Start Programs that are doing the best job. We spent a lot of money on Early Childhood Development from the Federal Government; the numbers are in the \$20 billions a year.

Most of us got on Head Start—it's on other things as well. The communities that are doing the best job of taking all the Federal money and focusing on it to help children are the ones that we hope other communities will model; and the Centers on Excellence do that.

I thank you for the hearing, Senator Dodd. I thank you for your service and your friendship. We have no doubt that in the next phase of your career the focus will include children and families.

Senator DODD. I thank you, Lamar, very much, for that very kind remark; and I, too, have enjoyed working with you. By the way, the statistics on premature births, as a result of our legislation, are actually declining.

That bill is up for reauthorization, so I'm counting on you to get it done as I leave. I'll be watching, carefully, here, too, from the bleachers.

Barbara, any thoughts? Comments?

Welcome.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKULSKI

Senator MIKULSKI. Well, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're not taking opening statements. I was going to ask a point of personal privilege, because for me, today, being with you, it is a privilege, and it is personal.

To our witnesses, I want to thank you for coming, and look forward to hearing your testimony.

But, like other colleagues here, we have to note this passing of the torch. Indeed, there has been a torch. We want to thank you, Senator Dodd, for your steadfast leadership. You never failed children; you never faltered in being their advocate; and you always found a way, regardless of what party was in power, to continue to serve these children.

You and I came to the Congress together; we served in the House together; we served in the Senate. I think you're just a real champion. I think all of America's children owe you a debt of gratitude; all of American families, from the legacy of Family and Medical Leave; safe, affordable availability of child care; and the list goes on.

I know in about 2 weeks we'll be having a tribute to you, and we'll commemorate every single item.

But for me what has been so inspirational is, again, the way—when I came to the Senate, I was the first Democratic woman, and for 8 years, the only Democratic woman here—that you didn't see the children's issues as like a girl's issue. Oh, Barb's here, and we're going to give it to you, to stovepipe it, to ghettoize it, and so on.

You set the standard that it's men and women in it together; and it's not about gender; it's about the agenda, to keep on fighting.

You've done this with such grace, such honor, such ingenuity. You've always had a fantastic staff that have worked with all of us. It's been, indeed, a pleasure.

As a social worker, I want you to know I pledge my efforts to continue the standards and the trust that you have established.

My very first job out of graduate school, at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, was a social worker in the Head Start Program. I was a child abuse social worker. I was a foster care social worker. And, you know what, I still am. And, now a social worker with power.

I think all of us here, want to pledge to you that what you've established, we're going to continue. I hope, over the next day or two, to talk to Senator Harkin about assuming the leadership of this subcommittee.

Senator DODD. Good.

Senator MIKULSKI. And to take, really, my passion, my experience with your legacy, and to meet these challenges; God knows, that our children are going to count on us. But, they're going to count on the men and women of the Senate to really stand up for them. And we want to stand up for them the way that you've done.

As I said, this is not going to be an Irish wake.

Senator DODD. No. We love Irish wakes.

Senator MIKULSKI. I can assure you we're not going to do an Irish wake for you or a Polish wedding for me.

[Laughter.]

We're going to make a wish. I think all of us on the committee would just like to give you a round of applause.

[Applause.]

Senator DODD. Ah, that's very nice, thank you. Thank you. That's good. OK, thank you.

I'm tempted to just keep on hearing from my colleagues, but we have some witnesses here this morning as well, and I'm delighted all of them are here.

Any quick comments—not on this subject matter. Bernie any thoughts on the subject matter, I appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR SANDERS

Senator SANDERS. Very briefly, this is a great panel, and thank you for assembling it.

Thank you, Chris, for the work that you've done with kids for so many years.

Let me be very blunt and to the point. Compared to the rest of the industrialized world, we are failing, failing, failing our children. The way we treat our children in this country is a national disgrace.

How can we be proud and serious as Americans, when in this great country we have, by far, the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world?

How can we be proud that 30 percent of our kids are dropping out of high school? In Vermont, I'm told half of those kids end up within the jail system.

We are building more and more jails, and yet, we are not giving educational opportunity to kids. Our child care system is a disaster.

In my State it is virtually impossible for a working-class person to find decent quality, affordable child care. We pay child care workers, who probably do more important work with young people than college professors. Many of them leave child care to get a boost in salary by working at McDonald's; all right?

We have, in this country, the most unequal distribution of income. I recommend the piece by Nick Kristof in the *New York Times* today called "Hedge Fund Republic—top 1 percent earns 23 percent of all income in America."

We have people here in the Congress who think good public policy is to give \$700 billion in tax breaks to the top 2 percent, and you've got hundreds of thousands of children who are homeless in America today.

If this great country has a future, there's one thing we have got to do, is completely change our attitude toward kids; they are the future of America, and we cannot continue to ignore them.

Chris, thank you for the work—

Senator DODD. Thank you.

Senator SANDERS [continuing]. You've done, but we've got a heck of a lot of work in front of us.

Senator DODD. Yes, you do.

Anyone else here? If not, we'll go to our witnesses, Kay and Bob.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CASEY

Senator CASEY. Chris, thank you very much—Mr. Chairman, I should say. I was hoping you'd be 5 minutes late today, because I was going to be sitting in for 5 minutes, but it didn't work out that way.

We're grateful, grateful for our witnesses who have labored in these vineyards a long, long time. We can learn a lot today; that's why I won't provide an opening. We'll submit it for the record.

But, I was thinking today, in the scriptures there's a line that goes something like: "A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter." The children of this country will always need, especially now, at a difficult time for our country, a faithful friend. The question is, will this Senate, will this government, will this country be that faithful friend?

They have had that faithful friend in the person of Chris Dodd for all these years, and for that, and so many other reasons, we're going to miss him; we're going to continue to be inspired by his work; and we're going to continue to call upon him to help us.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Casey follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR CASEY

Thank you, Senator Dodd, for holding this hearing today. On this last hearing of the Subcommittee on Children and Families this Congress, I want to thank you for your outstanding leadership on children's issues over the past three decades here in the Senate.

No one has done more to represent children. You started the Children's Caucus here in the Senate, along with Senator Specter, and, since that time, have worked tirelessly to advance legislation to strengthen American families and help children.

Be it the Family Medical Leave Act, Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Children's Health Insurance Program—or any number of other programs—you have helped to lay a foundation for American families to thrive and be protected when times are tough, as they are now.

This is work that will live on well after your time here and that I am committed to continuing.

I am delighted to be partnering with you on the *Children's Act of 2010*—a piece of legislation that, I believe, will provide us with an opportunity to help a new generation of children and families.

This legislation will establish a National Council on Children comprised of experts in children's issues—people with deep knowledge and on-the-ground experience—who can help our Nation, and leaders in the public, private and non-profit sectors, understand what can be done to ensure that this generation of kids has as many if not more opportunities to succeed as previous generations, even in spite of the unique challenges they face.

New Census figures indicate that more than one in five children in the U.S. is living in poverty, rising from 13.3 million in 2007 to 15.5 million in 2009.

This is not a remote threat. It is real. Parents have lost jobs—we have the highest long-term unemployment rate since the Great Depression.

The U.S. economy is creating jobs for the first time in 4 months, with an increase of 151,000 jobs last month.

This is good news, but we need to keep it up and we cannot forget that children are still in grave need of help.

A new study from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which looked at this recession and past recessions, finds that even when the economy starts to recover, it often takes years for families to bounce back—and in some respects, children never fully recover.

Just to share one fact from the report: In 2008, 1 year into the recession, 21 percent of all households with children were food insecure—the highest percentage since 1995.

If a child does not eat, he or she cannot learn. If a child does not learn, he or she will not be as able to graduate, find a job and become self-sufficient and productive. This is a loss of potential—or to use economic terms, human capital—that hurts us all.

That's why when we are talking about what can be done to grow our economy, we should talk about short-term actions we can take, but we must think about the long-term too. That is what I hope that this new Council will be able to accomplish, as children are the future of this country.

I look forward to hearing from the panel today their thoughts on what actions we can take to comprehensively address challenges and improve the lives of children across the United States.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Bob, very much.

All right, I think we'll get to our witnesses here. This is turning into a hearing—it isn't an Irish Wake which is—we love Irish Wakes, by the way. I'm a big fan of them, I tell you.

I'm going to introduce our witnesses, and they are a remarkable group of people, and people I've worked with for years, and years,

and years; and so it's a very special day, indeed, to have them here at the last of my hearings.

Beginning with Marian Wright Edelman, who's been a friend for more than 30 years, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, as all of you know in the room; the first African-American woman to be admitted to the Mississippi bar. She directed the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund in Jackson; worked on the Poor People's Campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King founded before his death; and has been just a remarkable individual.

Countless times we've held, publicly and privately, hearings and discussions. I know her family. Her husband's here with us today, Peter. In fact, in a way, this is a homecoming, I should point out to you, because Peter—I'll introduce in a minute—actually worked for Robert Kennedy, who was on this committee, and was sent down to Mississippi to do a little work on poverty. And he met a nice young woman in Mississippi named Marian Wright, and they became husband and wife.

So in a sense, Peter used to sit behind the chair here, and that's how he met Marian.

Today, they're back again. And I thought, what an appropriate conclusion bringing this full cycle, to have them both here today to talk about the issues which they both are committed much to.

Jennifer Garner is with us. Jennifer, we thank you immensely. I've had, really, the privilege of getting to know Jennifer and meeting with her and talking with her about her commitment to these issues; and certainly is well-known as an artist, and a very fine one, indeed, but decided to take that celebrity status and do something with it beyond just the awards and recognition you get for that work.

I commend you highly for that.

She has done a tremendous job working with To Save the Children.

I mentioned earlier, of course, it was the enthusiasm and the vitality of a guy named Sarge Shriver in the Johnson administration that really had so much to do with igniting the fires back in the 1960s to do so much.

Save the Children is run by Mark Shriver, who is in the room with us somewhere. I don't see him.

Mark, why don't you just raise your hand? Where are you? You're right there. Mark is here. I teased him. I was going to threaten to bring him up and be a witness.

Mark is carrying on in the tradition of his dad and his mother in making such a difference. I can't tell you what a tremendous job Mark has done in leading Save the Children, and the work they're doing; and Jennifer's work with them as well, being an ambassador for Save the Children.

I gather, in fact, you're going to be, today or tomorrow, going back to your home State of West Virginia to open up a Head Start Program down there as well. And so, her commitment goes back to her State, which certainly understands the issue of wrestling with poverty and related issues.

Jennifer, we thank you very, very much for being with us here today.

Dr. David Satcher, you've heard, already, Lamar Alexander make reference to. Dr. Satcher is the 16th Surgeon General of the United States, 1998–2002; and as the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1993 to 1998, under his leadership the Department of Health and Human Services took the bold step of establishing a national goal of eliminating health disparities as one of two overreaching goals for the United States to achieve by 2010. He's a former Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar and Macy Faculty Fellow.

We're delighted, Doctor, that you're here with us today.

Helen Blank and I have known each other forever. I don't remember a time not knowing Helen since I arrived in Congress. Director of the Leadership and Public Policy at the National Women's Law Center; her career is focused on expanding support, especially for Federal and State levels, for positive early care and educational experiences.

The Child Care Development Block Grant Program would not have happened. I offered the legislation, but I had an ally named Helen Blank, who really made all the difference in the world years ago, working with Orrin Hatch, as my partner in all of that, to develop that legislation.

While a lot more needs to be done, as Bernie points out eloquently this morning, we established a program, but in terms of providing the resource capacity and others, we still have a long way to go. The structure is there, if we're willing to provide the resources for it to make it happen.

Helen, we thank you very, very much.

Peter Edelman, I've already referenced; professor of law, co-director of the Joint Degree in Law and Public Policy Programs and the faculty director of the Center on Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy at Georgetown University Law Center; served in the Clinton administration as counselor to the HHS Secretary, Donna Shelala, and then as Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

I might point out he courageously resigned back in those days when the Administration—over the issue of welfare reform, as a protest over his belief that the law would move our country in the wrong direction when it comes to children. Unfortunately, facts have proven him to be correct, in my view.

Over a long career, Peter Edelman has been a champion for our Nation's poorest children; and of the saving and strengthening of the social safety network will be his testimony today.

To have Peter and Marian here today is very, very special, indeed.

Dr. Michael Casserly. Lamar introduced Dr. Casserly, and he has been talking about you a lot, I can tell you, over the time that he and I have been friends together.

Dr. Casserly is the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, the Nation's primary coalition of large and urban public schools. He has unified urban schools and nationwide around a vision of reform and improvement. He's currently spearheading efforts to boost academic performance in the Nation's large city schools, and strengthen the management and operations of those systems.

We thank you very much, Doctor, for being with us today.

Marian, we'll begin with you. I'll ask all of you to try to keep your remarks down to about 5 minutes or so, and then we'll submit and have for the record any testimony and supporting documents and information to strengthen the record as well.

We thank you immensely, once again, for appearing before this committee.

**MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, PRESIDENT, CHILDREN'S
DEFENSE FUND, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Well, I thank you immensely for all you've done. If I might add, I came here today to thank you, and to tell you we're never going to let you go, and you have to remain a leading voice for children outside the Congress as you have been inside the Congress.

I was sitting here thinking, the first time I think I ever came to the Senate was in 1964 as a young lawyer to visit your father on the Renewal of the Mississippi Summer Project.

I know how proud he would be of the extraordinary record you have made. You have done him, as well as all of us, proud, and I thank you. You have been a consistent 100 percent scorer on the Children's Defense Funds, Children's Voting Record; and again, I thank you for being that perfect student. We will miss you so much. We are so grateful for all you've done; and we will all put in the record on all you've done on children's health, on child care and the Family Medical Leave Act.

We've also just loved you. You have just been somebody who's accessible and easy to work with. And so, thank you.

So, all that progress said, we are, I think, faced with an extraordinarily difficult time for children in America now. They have only one childhood and that childhood is now. And millions of our children in this Nation require emergency attention in this recession-ravaged economy as poverty, and including extreme child poverty, hunger, and homelessness have increased to historic levels, if irreparable harm is not to be inflicted on them and on our Nation's future.

I sound like a broken record, but the greatest threat, I believe, to our national security comes from no enemy without. It comes from our failure to protect, invest in, and educate all of our children who make up all of our futures.

Children and the foundations of America's future, the foundation is crumbling. You don't say you can't afford to take care of it, and you don't deflect resources from what they need in investment, to give tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. That defies economic, common and moral sense.

It's a disgrace that children are the poorest age group in America, and the younger the children are, the poorer they are.

We rank highest among industrialized countries in relative child poverty. That is unworthy of us. And we rate last in terms of gun violence, in protecting our children and keeping them safe.

Children in America are three times more likely to die from gun violence than American soldiers in Afghanistan. I just think that we need to focus on safety and national security within, as well as from without.

Our Nation's schools: Many of our Nation's schools, public schools are letting all of our children down. A majority of all children in all racial and income groups cannot read or compute at grade level in 4th, 8th, or 12th grade if they have not already dropped out of school, and about half of our minority, Black young people, are not graduating from schools.

Worrisome, as a Black woman and as a mother, the fact that over 80 percent of Black and Hispanic children cannot read or compute at grade level in 4th, 8th, or 12th grade, is just beyond comprehension.

These children are being sentenced to social and economic death.

And, you've got a child population, the majority of them can't read and write in this globalizing economy, where is our competitive workforce going to come from? I mean, I say these things all the time, but I never can believe I'm actually saying these figures, and they are reality and we had better change them because they are the moral and Achilles' heel of this country.

They got between rich and poor. We've already heard eloquently of highs we've ever had; the combined net worth in the United States, 408 billionaires is almost \$1.5—\$4 trillion a year.

I can't believe that we're sitting here thinking about giving them another tax break. This is more than the combined GDP of 134 countries with more than a billion people.

I looked at 2008, because we really need to get our values straight, saw that the highest paid American CEO took home over \$100 million, which is an amount equal to the salaries of 2,028 elementary school teachers, or 3,827 Head Start teachers, or 5,274 childcare workers.

We need to reset our moral and economic compass to invest. We don't have a money problem; we have a values problem, a profound one. We have profound priorities problem, and we need to deal with this.

I just want to talk about the Cradle to Prison Pipeline very briefly. I know I'm being warned with my gold light here. This Cradle to Prison Pipeline, which is trapping one in three Black boys born in 2001, one in six Hispanic boys born in 2001—is creating a new American apartheid; and prison is the only thing—in fact, the only thing that this country will guarantee every child, is a detention or a jail cell after they get into trouble.

I can't think of a dumber investment policy.

We really need to reverse course and to guarantee them the kind of prenatal and preventative health care, and mental health care, and quality early childhood, and quality education that we need if we're going to move forward. We can and must do better.

I just want to make a few suggestions that I'm submitting for the record, some suggestions of what we ought to do as we reauthorize title I, and investing more in early childhood; obviously, the Child Tax Credit, the Unearned Income Tax, Poverty Prevention measures need to be there.

But in your National Council and your National Council of Children, which I just heard about, I hope that one of the most important things you can do is figure out how to get the Congressional Budget Office to score prevention as a savings and not as a cost, because we cannot win.

And, if we can figure out a way to have us quantify how much is saved to cover it, and it's common sense, I mean, not have children stay in long-term care, and not have them miss healthcare.

If we could begin to quantify prevention, invest the measure we're going to use to make our decisions, I hope that the Council could take that one on. It would be one of the most important things in the world, and, to set specific goals, and to have benchmarks toward how much we're meeting those goals.

Let me just end with a story, because I just think children are going backwards.

I thought that the American dream was about seeing our children and grandchildren doing better than we do. And, it's reversed, and we really do need to deal with that.

We are going to be calling together Black leaders in December at the Haley Farm, because we think that the Black child faces the worst crisis since slavery.

Black children and Hispanic children and white children are moving backwards, and we really need to try to see if we can reverse this trend or these trends.

I come from a little rural county in South Carolina, and I would just end with a very disturbing, short story. One Black minister called me up and said he just talked to three teenage boys, 12, 13, 14, and asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up; and one boy said, I want to work at McDonald's.

The second boy said, I want to be Spiderman, and when pushed he couldn't think of a known profession that he would have, because many children have never seen anybody work in our inner cities and poor rural areas. Work is just not—and we need to focus on jobs for these children and for their parents, and for young people.

And the third child said that he drew a picture on the ground and said, "Well, I don't have to worry about what I'm going to be when I grow up, because I'm not going to grow up. I'm going to be dead."

This is not America's dream. This is not Dr. King's dream. This is not what we're about as a country.

We just need to really stop and say, what is important? Who are we as a people? And, how are we going to make sure that we prepare our children for the next generation; and more importantly, to make sure that our children are there to make our country strong.

Without the strong child population, without educated children, the country is not going to be where we need to be in the future.

Thank you for what you've been doing. We've got a lot of work to do.

[The prepared statement of Marian Wright Edelman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Thank you Chairman Dodd, Senator Alexander and other members of the Subcommittee on Children and Families.

I am Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, and I am so honored to be able to join you for this important hearing focused on the "State of the American Child: Securing Our Children's Future." Your leadership in the Senate on behalf of children, Senator Dodd, has been so important to millions of children over these past three decades. You have shown us what can be done for children—you are a champion for children indeed. We will miss you.

Children have only one childhood and it is right now. Millions of children in our Nation require emergency attention in our recession-ravaged economy as poverty, including extreme child poverty, hunger, and homelessness have increased to historic levels, if irreparable harm is not to be inflicted on them and on our Nation's future.

The greatest threat to America's national security comes from no enemy without but from our failure to protect, invest in, and educate all of our children who make up all of our futures. Every 11 seconds of every school day a high school student drops out of school; every 32 seconds a baby is born into poverty; every 41 seconds a child is confirmed abused or neglected; every 42 seconds a baby is born without health insurance; every minute a baby is born to a teen mother; every minute a baby is born at low birthweight; every 3 hours a child or teen is killed by a firearm. A majority of children in all racial and income groups cannot read or do math at grade level in 4th, 8th or 12th grade and over 80 percent of Black and Hispanic children, who with other minority children will constitute a majority of our population in 2023, are behind in these grade levels—if they have not already dropped out of school.

If the foundation of your house is crumbling, you don't say you cannot afford to fix it. Children are the foundation of America's future. We need to invest now in their health, early childhood development and education. Today is tomorrow.

God has blessed America with great material wealth but we have not shared it fairly with our children and our poor. Although we lead the nations of the world in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in billionaires, and in military technology, defense expenditures and military exports, our money and our military might have not translated into moral might, adequate child safety and well-being, and a concept of enough for those at the top and at the bottom.

Children are the poorest age group and the younger children are, the poorer they are. We rank highest among industrialized nations in relative child poverty and in the gap between rich and poor, and last in protecting children against gun violence.

The gap between the rich and the poor is the highest ever recorded in America. In the 1960's, when the economy was expanding, about two-thirds of the Nation's income gains went to the bottom 90 percent of U.S. households. In the first half of this decade, it was just the opposite: the wealthiest 1 percent reaped two-thirds of income gains. Between 2002 and 2007, the income of the wealthiest 1 percent of U.S. households grew more than 10 times as fast as the income of the bottom 90 percent. In 2007, the income share for the wealthiest 10 percent of households, 49.74 percent, was the highest ever recorded.

In 2008, the highest-paid American CEO took home over \$100 million, an amount equal to the salaries of 2,028 elementary school teachers, or 3,827 Head Start teachers, or 5,275 child care workers. The average CEO of a Fortune 500 company earned 319 times as much as the average worker. The combined net worth of the United States' 408 billionaires is \$1.3493 trillion—greater than the combined GDP of 134 countries where more than a billion people live.

This fiscal year, the Department of Defense is scheduled to spend a total of \$683.7 billion. This is \$13.1 billion a week; \$1.9 billion a day; \$78 million an hour; \$1.3 million a minute; and \$29,679.13 a second. Just one second of defense spending is more than a Head Start teacher earns in a year. Yet our children are three times more likely to die from firearms at home than American soldiers who are fighting in the Afghanistan war. Headlines blazed across America in June 2010 when America's military death toll in Afghanistan reached 1,000 after 9 years of that war. No headline blazed when CDF released the disgraceful annual numbers showing more than 3,000 children—3,042 children in 2007—dying in the gun war at home. Six times as many nonfatal child gun injuries occurred that year.

The terrible Taliban terrorist threat to American child and citizen safety is rivaled by the terrible NRA threat which terrorizes our political leaders from protecting our children from the over 280 million guns in circulation which have taken over 110,000 child lives since 1979, when gun data collection by age began. More American preschool children died from guns in 2007 than police officers in the line of duty and more Black male youths die in 1 year from guns than all the lynching of Black people in American history. But where is our anti-war movement at home?

And where is our anti-poverty movement at a time when 1 in 50 Americans, a *New York Times* front page story tells us, has *no* cash income? "Almost six million Americans receiving Food Stamps report they have no income. They described themselves as unemployed and receiving no cash and no welfare, no unemployment insurance, and no pensions, child support or disability pay. About 1 in 50 Americans now lives in a household with a recorded income that consists of nothing but a Food Stamp card," the *New York Times'* Jason DeParle reported.

This shocking *New York Times* article provoked no public outcry, action or shame. It did not stop some political leaders from trying to block extension of unemployment insurance benefits and to block more Federal dollars to protect or create jobs, to expand tax credits for working families desperately trying to feed, house and clothe their children, or to increase investments to stimulate an economy struggling to recover with 14.8 million workers still unemployed and massive State deficits which will cause more job loss. How morally obscene it is that a nation with a GDP exceeding \$14 trillion cannot find the will, common sense and decency to provide a safety net to protect its more than 15 million poor children. The subcommittee learned from Elaine Zimmerman, the executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Children, at an earlier hearing and again when you took your field trip to Connecticut that the legislature there enacted a bill to cushion its children from the harmful impact of the recession by decreasing bureaucratic barriers to accessing a range of benefits and tax refunds. State leaders recognized that the impact of even short periods of poverty can have a long term—even permanent—effect on children pulled from the stable security of their home, school, and friends when families lose their homes and jobs and are forced to move in with others or into homeless shelters. The loss of a sense of safety amidst the turmoil of economic insecurity fuels stress for parents and children and breeds a sense of hopelessness about the future. Our leaders and citizens need to respond.

This is a time when America can and must turn economic downturn into an opportunity to step forward to correct the gross imbalance of government subsidization of the wealthiest and most powerful among us and provide a safety net for all children from growing hunger, homelessness and stress. A college student working three jobs in Connecticut, causing her to make lower grades, feels she will never be able to get into medical school and fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor. Teenagers are leaving home to ease the burdens on their unemployed parents. Now is the time to correct the laissez-faire Federal policies that enabled the few to run roughshod over the life savings of many hard working Americans and wreck the lives and dreams of millions of children. And now is the time to replace the costly, ineffective, unjust and abusive child and youth policies which favor punishment and incarceration and cost tens of billions of tax payer dollars with more cost-effective prevention and early intervention strategies, based on best practices that put children on the path to healthy adulthood rather than into the adult criminal system.

We are the world's leading jailer and are criminalizing our poor and minority children at younger and younger ages—both shameful badges of misguided and negative leadership. A Cradle to Prison Pipeline® crisis, driven by poverty and racial disparities, is becoming the new American apartheid threatening to undermine the hard earned racial and social progress of the last half century. The prison pipeline sucks hundreds of thousands of children every year into a trajectory that leads to marginalized lives, illiteracy, imprisonment and often premature death. Nationally, one in three Black and one in six Latino boys born in 2001 are at risk of imprisonment during their lifetime. There are more Black citizens under the purview of the corrections system today than there were Black people in slavery 10 years before the Civil War according to legal scholar Michelle Alexander in her important book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

The Federal Government is spending \$6.2 billion and States are spending \$50 billion a year to incarcerate 2.4 million people. States are spending on average three times more per prisoner than per public school pupil. New York State spends \$210,000 a year on youths in abusive and ineffective upstate New York youth prisons. Black children are 32 times more likely than White children to be incarcerated. Seventy-five percent of them have committed nonviolent offenses and pose no threat to public safety—until they come out. This unjustifiable profligate State youth prison spending of \$210,000 per youth—the equivalent of 4 years at Harvard or Yale—is simply underwriting abusive prep schools for the adult criminal system. Their recidivism rate is 75 percent. Their results threaten rather than increase public safety and derail so many youthful lives. There are far cheaper and more effective community-based alternatives that help rather than hurt children.

It is time to replace the costly, ineffective and destructive prison pipeline with a pipeline to college, career and productive work for all our young people. We cannot afford not to provide a healthy, fair and safe start for every child and a continuum of support with the help of caring families and communities to enable them to reach productive adulthood. You have already heard researchers speak to how dumb and costly our failure to invest early in children is. Building on best practices and accelerating help children and their families need, especially as we move out of this deep recession, is the right and economically wise thing to do in a decent society. Saving child lives early and saving money go hand in hand.

The Children's Defense Fund posted earlier this year our *State of America's Children 2010*, which is a call to action for us all to stand up and demand an end to the massive child suffering around the Nation. The catastrophic BP oil spill's assault on our environment was an urgent national emergency. But so is the catastrophic impact of this recession and the chronic plight and suffering of millions of children left adrift in a sea of poverty, hunger and homelessness and political neglect. Congress must see the recession and its aftermath as an emergency for children and take action for our children. We must secure our children's futures and our Nation's future.

The selfish and reckless profiteering of Wall Street bankers who are still living high need to be adequately regulated—to prevent a repeat economic catastrophe. And wounded children losing teachers and days of schooling and safe spaces after school and in the summer, and enough food and safe housing need equal priority attention by their government. If we could bail out bankers to steady the economy, we can bail out babies who without our help will see their hopes and dreams for a better life wiped out. Denying children their basic human rights to adequate nutrition, health care, education, and safety from adult neglect, abuse, and violence should be a no-brainer.

I grew up in a small rural county in South Carolina which I still call home. Marlboro County has a population of about 30,000: 52 percent African-American; 42.5 percent White; and 3.7 percent American Indian and Alaska Native. Our unemployment rate at last look was 20 percent. A Federal and a State prison are among the county's largest employers. I was deeply saddened by a recent story of three young teen boys in my county who were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. The first boy said he wanted to work at McDonalds; the second boy said he wanted to be Spiderman and when pushed for a real person, he could not think of one; and the third boy drew a boy lying on the ground and said he was going to be dead before he grew up.

This is not Dr. King's dream. This is not America's dream. This is not my dream for them. We can and must do better.

Thank you.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Marian, very, very much. I'm struck—and many members of this committee will recall back when we had the healthcare debate, back to this committee, and the bill we marked up, one of the things we tried to do was to score savings.

We all knew how to cost the purchase of a treadmill—to cite a silly example, obvious one. The question we never could get anyone to do was to tell us, now what would be the cost saved if someone uses it and actually loses weight, becomes healthier and all the other aspects of it. We never could score that. All we could score was the cost of the equipment, not the cost of the benefit to the people who use it and actually improve their health.

This is a classic problem we have, and one that, I think, deserves a great deal of attention.

We thank you very, very much for that.

Jennifer, thank you again for joining us today, and we would be delighted to hear your thoughts this morning.

**STATEMENT OF JENNIFER GARNER, ARTIST AMBASSADOR,
SAVE THE CHILDREN, LOS ANGELES, CA**

Ms. GARNER. Distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to be here today and to be joined by this panel of truly amazing advocates on behalf of America's children. It's an education for me, so thank you.

Before I begin, I want to take a moment to thank you, Chairman Dodd, not only for inviting me to participate in today's hearing, but also for your nearly four decades of dedicated service on behalf of children. We couldn't have asked for a stronger advocate on the side of our Nation's children, and personally speaking, I know you

to be an excellent lunch partner, and I'm sure that that will be missed as well, your guests in this Senate lunchroom.

Your leadership to form the first Children's Caucus led the way toward stronger national investments in early childhood education and child care programs, as well as landmark legislation that gave parents the right to take time off from work to care for a new baby, which we all know is the most critical time.

From the perspective of this witness your legacy on behalf of our Nation's children is simply undisputed. Thank you.

Senator DODD. Thank you.

Ms. GARNER. Senator, as you mentioned, I am proud to be a member of the team at Save the Children's U.S. Programs, and I'd like to acknowledge my partner in this endeavor, Mark Shriver, who is Head of U.S. Programs.

Thank you, Mark, for your leadership and your mentorship and your friendship.

He's also a good lunch partner, just for the record.

Members of this subcommittee, I am here as an advocate, as a plain, old ordinary citizen, and perhaps, most important, as a mom.

For me, reading to my daughters, singing with them, playing with them, is as elemental to my daily child rearing as feeding them and going on the carpool run.

This morning, my 1½-year-old has been sending me voice notes on my Blackberry requesting me to send voice notes back, of her favorite songs like, "I Love You a Bushel and a Peck" or "Owl and the Pussy Cat."

But, if you're one of the millions of American parents struggling with the recession or the poverty crisis, you're thinking about just keeping your kids fed and clothed. You're not singing show tunes in your house.

Many of these children's families face challenges that often seem insurmountable. Chronic unemployment, incarceration, domestic violences are often the main risk factors.

I'd like to share a short story with you from one of my site visits with Save the Children.

Last April, as part of my work for Save the Children, I visited the home of Teresa Fugate and Michael Blanton, a struggling, to say the least, couple raising four young children, age 3 to 7 in Breathitt County, KY, one of the most impoverished communities in America.

The Blantons live in a small trailer where the main source of heat is an open oven door, around which the children play. Their empty window panes were covered by cardboard.

This woman, Teresa, was a smart, American woman. She loved her kids as much as I love my kids. She wanted for them everything that I want for my kids. She had just fallen on bad luck. That is the only difference between us. She looked like me; she sounded like me. If she had hair and makeup this morning, she could be sitting right here and talk about children with a lot more knowledge than I could.

She saw Save the Children as a lifeline for her children. Save the Children comes into her home; it works with her children; it gives her the actual, physical tools of toys and books, to read with and play with her child; encourages her to play with her youngest chil-

dren; is at school with her older ones, working with them in the literacy programs.

Unfortunately, in this community that is absolutely steeped in despair, this actual Teresa Fugate died in a random shooting by her trailer, by a man who was frustrated that his wife had not made him the breakfast that he requested.

Now, obviously, anything could have set this man off. Anyone could have died in this shooting, but I think it is emblematic of the kind of despair that these communities—these children are growing up in.

We need to give them light. We need to give them something to hold on to—if it's Save the Children, if it's Children's Defense Fund. They need something in their future to point them in a direction.

Obviously, you know 90 percent of our brain growth occurs between birth and 5 years of age, so the words a toddler hears, the music that makes them sing and dance—and wake up singing—the games they play, build the foundations for their education.

Two out of five preschool-aged Americans are being denied a lifetime of success because they are not getting the Early Head Start or the preschool or any kind of stimulation until they enter kindergarten, and by that time they're so far behind, they're playing catch-up from the beginning. And, what child can start out 2 years behind in kindergarten and catch up? I'd like to see them succeed at this.

Every parent should be armed with the tools they need; books, music, games, to be the best parent they can be and keep their children stimulated at home.

There's action being urged right now by Save the Children's U.S. Programs and our partners at the First Five Years' Fund that can begin to make a difference.

I hope that Congress will act immediately in this November session to fully fund the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start in the fiscal year 2011 appropriations.

We also need to make a down payment on the Early Learning Challenge Fund, an \$8 billion proposal to promote innovative models for early childhood education by providing the \$300 million the Senate Appropriations included in this next year's spending bill.

Save the Children's Early Steps to School Success, Early Childhood Education Programs, operates in almost 100 of the poorest communities in America, including, as I mentioned, in Breathitt County, KY.

And, tomorrow we will head to my native home, West Virginia, to officially open our programs there.

We go to the homes, in these programs, such as the Blantons, and work directly with the parents. And, paired with our in-school literacy program for elementary-aged kids, we're putting some of the most vulnerable kids on the path to success.

In fact, I'm proud this morning to announce brand new results from our programs across the board. Children in our literacy programs improve their reading skills as much as if they had attended an extra 4 months of school per year. The number of children reading at or above grade level nearly doubled after they participated in our program. Sixty-four percent of children showed significant

improvement in their literacy scores. Children in our Early Education Program scored right in line with the national average on key vocabulary tests, and scored significantly higher than children in Early Head Start.

These are extraordinary results, especially considering the circumstances faced by many of the children that we serve.

The Brookings Institute estimates that a deep and truly serious investment in early childhood education would add \$2 trillion to the gross domestic product within a generation. This would be an incredible return on investment that would, in the future, help solve many of the problems our Nation is struggling with today.

Now is the time to give every American child an equal start in life by investing in early childhood education.

Thank you for inviting me here today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Garner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER GARNER

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to be here today to testify about the power of investing in early childhood education.

I am proud to be a member of the team at Save the Children's U.S. Programs and I want to acknowledge my partner in all this work, Mark Shriver, who is the head of U.S. Programs.

If you have children under six like I do, reading them *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?*, listening to Mozart or playing Candyland is probably as elemental to your daily child-rearing routine as feeding them carrots or changing their diapers.

However, for millions of American parents struggling with the recession or affected by the poverty crisis that the Census Bureau recently revealed to be at historic levels, these kinds of activities are often financially impossible or they simply take a backseat to keeping a family fed and clothed.

Denying children early education activities robs them and their families of a brighter future and locks the American cycle of poverty into place.

Indeed, stimulating toddlers with reading, music and games provides them with the foundation for the next two decades of their education.

Ninety percent of our brain growth occurs between birth and 5 years of age. Thus, the words a toddler hears, the music that makes them tap their feet and the games they play actually nourishes and builds their minds.

Feed toddlers properly and their brains will be pumped up and ready for their K-12 education. Deprive them of this stimulation, and they're not ready for school, which is proven to lead to increased high school dropout rates, higher levels of incarceration and unemployment.

Some very smart and visionary leaders, including Mark's father, Sargent Shriver, understood the value of early childhood education and created Head Start in 1965, which was followed up three decades later with Early Head Start.

Still, Early Head Start reaches only 5 percent of eligible children, and only about half of the eligible population of 3- to 5-year-olds receive Head Start services. Even paired with private preschools, only 3 out of 5 preschool-aged kids are enrolled in some sort of childhood education.

That means two out of five pre-school-aged Americans are being denied a lifetime of success.

That's two out of five too many.

This should come as no surprise, as just 14 percent of our public education investment is directed toward children five and under.

Simply put, it should be a right for every single toddler to be enrolled in a high-quality, early-education program. In addition, every parent should be armed with the tools they need—books, music and games—to be the best parents they can be and keep their children stimulated at home.

There is action being urged right now by Save the Children's U.S. Programs and our partners at the First Five Years Fund that can begin to make a difference.

First, I hope Congress will act immediately in this November session to fully fund the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

If we don't take this action now, nearly 300,000 children could lose their early learning services.

We also need to make a down payment on the Early Learning Challenge Fund, an \$8 billion proposal to promote innovative models for early childhood education, by providing the \$300 million the Senate Appropriations included in next year's spending bill.

These funds will go a long way to supporting innovative programs like the ones we run at Save the Children's U.S. Programs.

Our Early Steps to School Success early childhood education program operates in almost 100 of the poorest communities in America, including my native home of West Virginia.

Through these programs, we go into homes and work directly with parents and have achieved extraordinary results. Paired with our in-school literacy program for elementary-aged kids, we are putting some of the most vulnerable kids on a path to success.

In fact, I am proud this morning to announce brand-new results from our programs.

- Children in our literacy program improved their reading skills as much as if they attended an additional 4 months of school.
- The number of children reading at or above grade level nearly doubled after they participated in our program.
- 64 percent of children showed significant improvement in their literacy scores.
- Children in our early education program scored right in line with the national average on key vocabulary tests, despite risk factors, and scored significantly higher than children in Early Head Start.

These numbers are particularly impressive given the extraordinary challenges faced by the kids in our programs. Far too many of them come from homes where unemployment, poverty and even parents who are incarcerated are prevalent.

The Brookings Institute estimates that a deep and truly serious investment in early childhood education would add \$2 trillion to the Gross Domestic Product within a generation. This would be an incredible return on investment that would, in the future, help solve many of the problems our Nation is struggling with today.

There is a decades old and very robust debate about the role of government in helping families living in poverty. But 3-year-olds don't even have boot straps to pull on.

Now is the time to give every American child an equal start in life.

Thank you for inviting me here today and I am very pleased to answer any questions that members of the subcommittee may have.

Senator DODD. Thank you, very, very much, Ms. Garner. We appreciate your being here. And good luck in West Virginia tomorrow, too—going back to your home State.

Ms. GARNER. Yes, thank you.

Senator DODD. Peter, thank you so much for joining us here, and I'm anxious to hear any thoughts you have.

**STATEMENT OF PETER EDELMAN, PROFESSOR OF LAW,
GEORGETOWN LAW CENTER AND FACULTY CO-DIRECTOR,
GEORGETOWN CENTER ON POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND
PUBLIC POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. EDELMAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DODD. Thank you for your work over the years, as well. You've been a great advocate, and the combination of you and Marian has just been phenomenal on this subject matter.

Welcome back to a committee you're familiar with.

Mr. EDELMAN. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I feel so honored to be part of this hearing this morning. As Marian said, speaking about your father and how this comes full circle for both of us. When I worked for Robert Kennedy, I worked very closely with your father and his staff—Senator Kennedy and Senator Dodd—on hearings about substance abuse in our country. And, so, I remember that very, very well. It was an initial baptism for me, if you will, in Senate hearing work; and here we are, coming all the way, full circle.

I join everybody in speaking about the indelible mark, really, that you've left on our country.

I'd like to put some of the conversation about children and early childhood that we've heard from Marian and Jennifer in a context.

I think one very important piece to keep in mind—we've heard from Marian, from Senator Sanders, about how much of the income and wealth is stuck and concentrated at the top, and we absolutely need to address that for our future as a Nation.

The other side of the coin is that the economic history over the last four decades has been one of near stagnation for people with jobs—not just the poor, but people with jobs that pay below the median wage, the entire bottom half, if you will.

De-industrialization has really left us just awash in low-wage jobs. And half the jobs in this country now pay under \$30,000 a year. A quarter pay less than the poverty line for a family of four. Those are full-time jobs that I'm talking about.

Children are now growing up in large numbers to get jobs that pay less than what their parents earn.

That's the other side of the gap that's growing between the top and bottom. And, it's really important to understand why we haven't made more progress, with all the good work that's been done, in reducing poverty over the last 40 years.

All of the programs and policies that you, Senator Dodd, Senator Mikulski—others who have been here for quite a while have—have contributed to, made a difference, made a huge difference in cushioning the damage that's been done by these massive changes in the economy. And, millions more people would be in poverty if we didn't have these programs and policies.

In fact, one thing that just has struck me in the last few days—particularly now, with the struggle that so many people are having, but with the low-wage work, is President Obama's Debt Commission co-chair is proposing to make cuts in the Earned Income Tax Credit and the child tax credit, makes no sense whatsoever, not, really at any time, given this economic history, but especially now.

There are a couple things that I would point out in terms of the history of, again, placing things in the history of the last 40 years, obviously, still questions of race, still questions of gender, that we've made progress about, but not nearly enough; the education of our children that Marian spoke of.

I would particularly point out as an area where we just haven't figured out what to do, and haven't done nearly enough, is the concentrated poverty in our inner cities.

That's where the highly controversial—the poverty that becomes politicized, where we hear all kinds of labels attached to people, and where, really, the concatenation of everything that's there in those neighborhoods and communities, is robbing children of their future.

So, it's not just the schools; it's the criminal justice system; it's every aspect of community; it's the heart of where the crisis of young Black men is. It's not only young, Black men who are going to prison in too large numbers, but especially, it is that group.

The heart of what we need to do for children and families is work that produces a decent income, coupled with work supports, proper safety net and all of that. We really have to understand that we

have to have multiple strategies if we're going to deal with child poverty in this country.

The strongest anti-poverty strategy is certainly full employment, but we have to do all of the rest.

I just want to take a little different cut here for a last minute, and that is that we need to understand that in income terms, we really are talking about three different levels here: one, which—obviously, poverty itself, and the fact that so many of the poor actually have jobs. Sixty-one point six percent of the income of people below the poverty line comes from work. We don't recognize that; but, even more so, extreme poverty.

We now have over 19 million people. Six point three percent of the American people live with incomes below half the poverty line; below \$8,500 for a family of four. And, all that we have, essentially, to help them, is food stamps. We now have 6 million people in this country who have no income other than food stamps. And food stamps only gives help at one third of the poverty line.

Welfare, for all practical purposes, is gone as something to help people, in many, many parts of our country. In the State of Wyoming, next door to Colorado, Senator Bennet, in 2008, 281 families in the entire State was on welfare. And that's not atypical as we look around the country.

There's virtually no public attention to the issue of extreme poverty. We need to focus on it.

And, on the other end, the working near-poor, really it—to make ends meet in this country, reams of research say it's got to be at least twice the poverty line. That's where the real break comes in, being able to pay the bills every month. And, we have not focused sufficiently. These aren't people who are poor. Maybe the poverty line's too low.

You've worked on this, Senator Dodd, so much. But they are people who are in deep economic trouble, and it's the low-wage jobs and our inattention to all of that.

I hope these framing thoughts are helpful. And, I would say again, Senator Dodd, we'll miss you terribly. I know you'll still be a voice and force for what we're doing. And the great progress that we've made—you contributed so much. And, so thank you again for the opportunity to be here this morning.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Edelman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER EDELMAN

SUMMARY

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this, perhaps the last hearing Senator Dodd will chair as a Member of the U.S. Senate. Millions of American children and their families are better off for the phenomenal trail of achievement that Senator Dodd has blazed.

The economic history of the past 40 years has been one of near-stagnation for people with jobs that pay less than the median wage. De-industrialization has left our country with a massive number of low-wage jobs. Along with the further fact that virtually all of the economic growth over that period has gone to people with the very highest incomes, these facts are vital to understanding why we have not made more progress in reducing poverty over that time. The substantial funding that the Federal Government has provided to lower income people has cushioned the hurt occasioned by the massive changes that have occurred in our economy. Millions more families would be in poverty without those investments.

Many other factors affect the level of poverty and who is poor. Race, gender, disability, marital status, education levels, where people live, and much more all mat-

ter. The heart of the answer is work that produces a decent income, coupled with work supports, a decent safety net, and educational opportunity, but the strongest antipoverty strategy is full employment. At the moment, it is vital to continue providing help for the millions who have been unemployed for a long time and still have no prospect of finding a job. Poverty has many faces and forms, so particular problems require particular solutions. Concentrated poverty in inner cities is one such problem.

There are three distinct problems in terms of levels of income. In addition to better strategies to get people out of poverty, we need to pay far more attention to the 19 million people who live in extreme poverty, with incomes below half the poverty line, and to the 100-plus million people with incomes up to twice the poverty, who are not poor but whom extensive research shows have a continually difficult time making ends meet. At the lower end we need to be aware that 6 million people have food stamps as their only source of income, at about a third of the poverty line. And in light of the large number of Americans with low-wage work who get by only with federally financed income supplements, it was disturbing to see that the co-chairs of President Obama's debt commission are suggesting consideration of cuts in the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child tax Credit.

The responsibility for remedying poverty reaches far beyond government. Civic leaders, volunteers, and low-income people themselves have a responsibility. We need leadership to find common ground between those who stress public policy solutions and those who emphasize voluntarism and personal responsibility. All are germane to making progress.

We celebrate Senator Dodd today. He has been in the forefront of almost everything good that has happened in Federal policy for children and families. I am deeply honored to be able to say to him directly and from my heart, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Alexander, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be part of this important hearing. Even more important, thank you for including me in this transcendentally significant occasion—perhaps the last hearing you will chair as a member of the U.S. Senate, Senator Dodd. Your work on behalf of children and families, as in so many other areas, has left an indelible mark on our Nation. I speak for my wife as well as myself in thanking you for all you have done. Millions of American children and their families are better off for the phenomenal trail of achievement that you have blazed. The list would use up my allotted time and much more, going from the Family and Medical Leave Act through SCHIP, and on through child care, Head Start, children with disabilities, HIV-AIDS, and much much more. Few Senators in the history of this body can claim such a record of accomplishment.

You have asked me to reflect on the achievements and disappointments of recent decades with regard to child poverty in our country, on lessons learned, and on what we need to do going forward.

It is impossible to understand child poverty trends without placing them in a context of what has happened to the American economy and to the distribution of income and wealth. Except for the last half of the 1990s, the economic history of the past four decades has been one of near-stagnation for people with jobs that pay below the median wage in the country—the entire bottom half, if you will. De-industrialization—the flight of jobs abroad and the replacement of many jobs by automation—has hurt millions. Good paying factory jobs have been replaced (fortunately, new jobs did come along) by much lower paying service jobs. Half the jobs in the country pay less than \$30,000 a year, and a quarter pay less than the poverty line for a family of four. Large numbers of children have grown up to get jobs that pay less than what their parents earned. Our economy did grow, but the increased income went almost entirely to people at the top of the income ladder. To cite just one stunning statistic, the top 1 percent took in 9 percent of personal income in 1976 and 23.5 percent in 2007. Understanding this framework is vital to understanding why we have not made more progress in reducing poverty over the past 40 years, as well as the larger situation of all lower income families and individuals. It is all far more rooted in the fact of low-wage work and the ever-growing gap between rich and poor than we typically say out loud.

We did in fact provide significant new Federal funding over this period that kept the stagnation of the bottom half—especially families that would otherwise be in poverty or more deeply in poverty—from being as damaging as it would otherwise have been. The Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, Medicaid and SCHIP, child care assistance, food stamps, housing vouchers, Pell grants, and other forms of assistance all have the effect, directly or indirectly, of adding to the income of lower income families. These have been, and continue to be, wise investments to

cushion the damage done by the massive changes that have occurred in our economy. We would have millions more families in poverty or more deeply in poverty without these investments.

This, briefly, is the big picture—trends in wages and income distribution and trends in income supports, be they in cash or in kind. But poverty is not monolithic, and the totality of the steps that need to be taken to end poverty is consequently not monolithic. There are racial, gender, and ethnic disparities that require special attention to continuing discrimination and the underlying reasons for disparate outcomes for the groups affected, whether in education, the criminal justice system, or elsewhere. The elderly present different challenges from those of working age, although we should celebrate the enormous success we have had over the past half century in bringing the elderly from being the poorest age group to being the least poor. Disabled people present unique issues. So do people who live in rural areas, as well as people who live in inner-city neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Educational disparities lead to disproportionate problems of poverty. Children who grow up with a single parent—typically a single mother—are much more likely to be poor during their childhood, and more likely to experience poverty in adulthood. Children are now the poorest age group. Each of these groups and areas presents different policy issues.

A particular area of concern is the continuing issue of concentrated poverty in inner cities. If anything, the poverty in those areas is more entrenched than ever. It is persistent, is too often intergenerational, and disproportionately involves people of color. Comparatively speaking, the numbers are not large, encompassing perhaps 15 percent of the poor, but the poverty of the inner city is the image many have of American poverty in general. It is an artifact of de-industrialization, plus the flight of middle-class residents to the suburbs beginning in the 1970s, plus continuing racial discrimination, plus terrible schools, and more, all of which have added up to produce behaviors and troubling statistics that are the fuel of political controversy.

This list of the various faces and forms of poverty underscores the obvious. A full-scale assault on American poverty, or even an assault confined to the category of children and families that is the jurisdiction of this subcommittee, will entail multiple strategies engaged in by multiple actors. The heart of the answer for children and families is work that produces a decent income, but this also must be coupled with necessary work supports, a proper safety net, and a sufficient investment in education to prepare children for participation in the economy and the broader society (and afford mid-career adults the chance to retool for jobs in emerging areas). The full list of remedies is even longer, reaching to health care and mental health, child care and pre-K, housing, neighborhood revitalization, transportation for access to jobs, help with college costs, legal services, drug and alcohol treatment, both immigration reform and juvenile and criminal justice reform, and more. And it cannot be emphasized too strongly that no one will succeed in making the most of available opportunities unless he or she assumes personal and individual responsibility for doing so.

The strongest antipoverty strategy is full employment. I am sure everyone in this room is deeply worried about when and even whether our current unemployment crisis will abate. Our first need, which is obviously beyond the jurisdiction of this subcommittee, is economic policy that will produce the jobs we need for our people. The plethora of low-wage jobs has been a serious problem for a long time, but for the last 25 years we at least had an overall unemployment rate that was the envy of the rest of the world. Far too many of the jobs we still have pay shockingly little but, even worse, we now have too few jobs overall, and no clear strategy for accelerating the rate of recovery to get back to where we were, which was itself far from perfect.

Our first need is jobs but, especially in the current crisis, we also cannot stop helping the millions who have been unemployed for a long time and have no prospect of finding a job any time soon. I hope Congress will act before November 30 to continue the extended benefits that are the lifeline for a huge number of people. And if we have a very large number of new poor, we still have the very large number of children and families who were already poor before the recession began. All of these are problems that demand constructive attention.

Just as poverty is not monolithic as a matter of race or gender or place or in many other ways, we need to focus on low-income people in a more income-precise way.

There are, roughly, three different groups.

The first is the astonishing number of people who live in extreme poverty—with incomes below half the poverty line, or below \$8,500 a year for a family of three. In 2009 this number climbed to 19 million people, or 6.3 percent of the population, but it had crept up from 12.6 million in 2000 to 15.6 million even before the reces-

sion began. Our safety net for such people is riven with gaping holes. Six million people now have income only from food stamps—and food stamps provide an income at only about a third of the poverty line. Welfare is virtually nonexistent in many States, and is of little help in many others. With the recession, the food stamp caseload has climbed to well over 40 million people, while welfare has barely increased to somewhat more than 4 million. In Wyoming the welfare caseload in 2008 was 281 families, covering 4 percent of the poor children in the State. Nor is this atypical. Nationally, only 22 percent of poor children received welfare in 2008, compared to 61 percent in 1995. In 1991 12 percent of poor women had no job and no welfare. By 2007 the number was 34 percent. There is virtually no public attention to the issue of extreme poverty.

The second group is comprised of those whom we call poor, whose income in 2009 was below about \$17,000 for a family of three and about \$22,000 for a family of four. Senator Dodd, you have been a leader in proposing legislation to reconstitute the poverty line to a level that is more realistic and takes into account both all elements of income and all the basic costs of living. I think there is a sense in the country that the poor are somehow a group that is separate and apart from everyone else. This is by and large not true. A large percentage of families with incomes below the poverty line do work. They have seasonal or sporadic or part-time work and even full-time jobs, and a hefty 61.6 percent of their income comes from work or self-employment. They bring in as much money as they can from work, but in millions of cases scrape by only because they are able to supplement their income by turning to the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. I therefore found it surprising and disturbing to read that the co-chairs of President Obama's debt commission are suggesting consideration of cuts in these two crucially important income supplements. I frankly don't understand the thinking here.

The third group is those who are not poor by any measure and would reject any label in that regard, but who nonetheless face a continuous struggle to make ends meet every month. These are people who have to decide whether to go to the doctor when they are ill (even if they have health coverage, due to the expense of paying the deductible or the co-insurance). Reams of research suggest that this group is composed of people with incomes up to twice the poverty line. It constitutes nearly a third of the population—more than 100 million people. The focus of our public policy needs to be not just poverty, but all lower income people who are having such a difficult time.

It is critical to stress that the remedies for poverty and near-poverty are a responsibility that reaches far more sectors and groups than what goes on in the Federal Government, or in government at all levels, as important as public policy is. Civic leaders from every sector, volunteers of all kinds, and low-income people themselves all have a responsibility. There is a tendency for some to stress one or the other—public policy solutions or voluntarism and personal responsibility. The real truth is that the responsibility is both/and in every way we can think of it. We need leadership on both sides of the aisle to find the common ground that has to be the reality of making progress for the future of all of our children.

Senator Dodd, we will miss you terribly. I know you will still be a voice and a force for what we should be doing and that is comforting. We have made great progress over these past decades and in the past 2 years and you have been in the forefront of almost everything that has happened. I am deeply honored to be here this morning and to be in the fortunate position of being able to say to you directly and from my heart, thank you.

Senator DODD. Well, Peter, thank you immensely—you and Marian both. Your insight and the work that you've done on this is tremendously important. I just urge my colleagues who will be here, to stay in touch with you, the young people you work with, the graduates, the going on and just so much data is that—as Pat Moynihan used to say—and now I hear Lawrence O'Donnell using the line—"You're entitled to your own opinions, but not your own facts." I must have heard Pat Moynihan say that a million times when I served with him here, and I think of this so often.

These are just facts, and they're not debatable. You can argue about what policies you want to apply to make it work, but the facts are what you outline them to be. And, we can deny them; we can refuse to identify them, but they're not going to go away. And, the numbers, unfortunately, are growing worse.

So, your counsel and your advice and participation can be tremendously helpful to this committee and the Congress in the coming days as we wrestle with these issues.

Thank you, immensely.

Mr. EDELMAN. Thank you.

Senator DODD. Dr. Satcher, thank you once again for being back before the committee. We miss you and you did a great job during your tenure. We used to listen to you frequently here in this committee, and we thank you for being a part of this, today's hearing.

STATEMENT OF DAVID SATCHER, M.D., Ph.D., DIRECTOR, THE SATCHER HEALTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AND CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON HEALTH DISPARITIES, MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, ATLANTA, GA

Dr. SATCHER. Well, thank you very much, Senator Dodd, and members of the subcommittee. I am delighted to be able to be here, especially for this, your last hearing. I had a lot of opportunities to testify before you during the 9 years that I served in government; five as Director of the CDC and four as Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health.

I just want to say one thing: At the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine, we have a saying that applies to you. We say that we need more leaders who care enough, who know enough, who are willing to do enough and who will persevere until the job is done.

And, so I salute you today for being a model of that kind of leadership, and express, on behalf of all of my colleagues, our appreciation for your great leadership in the interest of child health in this country.

Senator DODD. Thank you, very much, Doctor. I appreciate it.

Dr. SATCHER. I will make four brief points: One is, that the most important investment that we can make in this country, as you've heard, is in the health of children. And, I think the most important time for that investment, of course, is during the reproductive periods, in utero periods, and early childhood. I think we are failing, during the most delicate period of development of our children, to make sure that they have adequate nutrition, that they are protected from toxins such as lead, and tobacco, substance abuse; and we're losing that battle. Secondhand smoke is still a major problem for children in this country.

I think the first recommendation would be that we focus more on this early period of childhood that deals with the health of mothers. You remember that during my tenure in government, working together, we were able to get the fortification of folic acid into flouring mills, which significantly reduced the incidence of neuro-tube defects in this country.

Just one example of what can happen when children receive the right micronutrients, and the dangers of them not receiving them.

The second thing I want to say is that I think that we have ignored the development of the brain in children in so many ways. We know more and more about the brain every day, as you know. I released the first Surgeon General's Report on mental health.

But many of our children, during the most delicate period of the brain development, are not getting the nutrition that they need,

are not being protected from toxins, but are also not getting the social interaction and motivation.

When I was a member of the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, our first visit was to Chile. And, what I remember most about that visit is that Chile had made a decision many years ago to invest in the children of the poor.

Beginning with 3 months of age, Chile decided to invest in daycare and early childhood education all the way through the ninth grade, including good nutrition and physical activity.

Their logic was that by investing early, they would not have to invest as much later in the medical care or in criminal justice.

I think it's a lesson that we, as a Nation, really need to learn.

Sweden has a long history of making this kind of investment in the poor.

And, for those of us who are members of the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, that first visit sort of stood out, and you can see the products of it in our report.

Another problem I want to mention is childhood obesity. Now, as you probably remember, in December 2001, I was able to release the Surgeon General's Call to Action to prevent and reduce overweight and obesity. We called it an epidemic, and that was a shock to some people, because epidemics usually apply to infectious diseases. But, we noted between 1980 and 2000 childhood overweight and obesity had tripled in this country. So we thought that we could call it an epidemic. We made some major recommendations about investing in physical activity and good nutrition.

After leaving government, I was able to start an organization called Action for Healthy Kids, to work with schools in this country to try to get them to return to physical education in K-12 and to model good nutrition.

One of the things I remember is that we had a lot of difficulty working with schools initially. They said, "Well, why do you want to dump the problem of childhood obesity on us? We already scrubbed in with No Child Left Behind and now you want to give us another problem."

So, it was a difficult partnership until, in 2005, we released a report called The Learning Connection. In that report we summarized all of the research showing that children who ate a good breakfast and children who were physically active on a regular basis learned better in school. They did better on standardized exams, in reading and math. They were better disciplined. They were much less likely to be absent from school.

And, so I think then we became a real partnership. We now have 24,000 volunteers throughout the country.

Ninety-five percent of schools now have policies related to physical activity and good nutrition, but they don't have the funds to implement them. I think there's a real lesson there.

The last point I want to make is about this critical recommendation from the World Health Organization, and I'll just read it as we stated it.

Our commission said that we must commit and implement a comprehensive approach to early life, building on existing child-

survival programs and extending interventions in early life to include social/emotional and language/cognitive development.

That's the World Health Organization's recommendation for countries all over the world.

The United States needs to listen to that recommendation. As you know, we rank No. 29 out of 30 in infant mortality, despite our wealth. And, we have a long ways to go in terms of responding to the needs of our children.

So, I close today by saying that I think we have a tremendous opportunity to turn around the course that we're on, in terms of what's happening to children in the United States. We have an opportunity to be a leader in the global community, in carrying out the recommendations of the World Health Organization's for Social Determinants of Health.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as you leave the Senate and we continue to try to do what's best for children.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Satcher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID SATCHER, M.D., PH.D.

I am Dr. David Satcher and I am director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. From October 1993 to February 1998, I served as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and from February 1998 to February 2002, I served as the 16th Surgeon General of the United States. For 3 of those years, 1998–2001, I also served as the Assistant Secretary for Health and was responsible for providing leadership for the development of *Healthy People 2010*.

I am pleased to join you for this important discussion on the state of the American child. I am especially grateful to be a part of this last hearing before Senator Dodd, who has contributed so much to improving the conditions of child health in America, including critical support for the Child Health Insurance Program of 1996.

Today I am pleased to express my appreciation and that of my colleagues, who work daily to improve the health of children, to Senator Dodd for all that you have been and done on behalf of the children in this country and the world.

As Surgeon General, I stated that the best investment that we could make as a nation was to invest in the health and future of our children. One of the greatest responsibilities of leaders is to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Children, especially, need advocates and they need leaders like Senator Dodd.

Today I want to comment briefly on four aspects of the health of children. First, the impact of reproduction and in utero; second, the impact of the environment on the brain; third, childhood obesity; and fourth, the social determinants of health.

First, children are greatly impacted by reproductive health and the conditions of pregnancy and their in utero experience. According to *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2010*,

“Infants born preterm and with low-birth weight are at high risk of early death and long-term health and developmental problems. Following many years of increases, the U.S. preterm birth rate declined for the second straight year, from 12.8 percent in 2006 to 12.7 percent in 2007 to 12.3 percent in 2008. Decreases in preterm rates between 2007 and 2008 were seen for each of the three largest race and ethnicity groups: White, non-Hispanic, African-American, non-Hispanic, and Hispanic women.”

Children in utero need to be nourished by good nutrition and a safe environment. They need protection from toxins of various kinds, including alcohol, tobacco, lead, and various forms of substance abuse. Likewise, it is important that children in utero are protected from infectious diseases, trauma, and violence. Irreversible damage is done to the health of children and adults by adverse in utero experiences. There is also increasing evidence that the environment in the womb plays a role in later development in childhood and adulthood of obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The most important target organ for all of our efforts to improve the health of children and of adults is the brain. The conditions to which the brain is exposed in utero and in early childhood are most critical to healthy outcomes in children and

adults. A recent survey reveals that 20 percent of children will suffer some mental or behavioral disorder each year including substance abuse.

We know that high-quality nutrition during gestation and after delivery is critical to the healthy development of the child. The avoidance of toxins in utero is critical to the normal development of the brain—toxins such as lead, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. The brain needs nutrients including vitamins, minerals, and others. And the brain needs it from the earliest period of development. In fact we know that inadequate intake of folic acid by the mother before and following conception is a major risk factor for neuro-tube defect. Likewise, the impact of other nutrients from the earliest period of development is crucial.

The brain not only needs the nutrients of nourishing foods and drink but also the nutrients of positive social relationships beginning with parents. Language development and other social skills are greatly impacted during this early period of life. Programs that aim to enhance early child development are worth their weight in gold and some countries are now investing heavily in this period of life.

At birth, children face conditions that stem from their in utero experience and new challenges to their health and well-being from their new environment. Children need to be immunized against common infectious diseases that can damage the developing brain, causing ongoing problems. In early childhood children need special nurturing relationships with parents in order to develop appropriate social skills and optimal brain development. Early childhood and parental immunizations have reduced the incidence of rubella and general measles, preventing or protecting the brain from serious damage from these infectious diseases.

Fortunately, improvement and access to quality prenatal care have enhanced birth outcomes and have continued to help decrease infant mortality. Yet as a nation, we continue to trail other industrialized countries and some developing countries in infant mortality. According to the CDC, in 2004 (the latest year that data are available for all countries), the United States ranked 29th in the world in infant mortality. In 2005, the U.S. infant mortality rate was 6.86 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, not significantly different than the rate of 6.89 in 2000.

Children are also needlessly exposed to environmental toxins early in life with second-hand smoke probably being the most prevalent and damaging and most preventable. In 2007–8, 53 percent of children ages 4–11 had detectable blood cotinine (a breakdown product of nicotine) levels, down from 64 percent in 1999–2000 and 88 percent in 1988–94. The percentage of children with cotinine levels indicating high levels of secondhand smoke exposure declined from 26 percent in 1988–94 to 18 percent in 1999–2000. However, the percentage did not change significantly from 1999–2000 to 2007–8. We have also made dramatic progress over the last 30 years in reducing the exposure of children to lead in early childhood and that progress needs to continue.

Environmental agents of various kinds have led to an increase in childhood asthma in recent years, especially in inner city children. In 2008, 9 percent of children had asthma that was either active or well-controlled. This percentage increased slightly from 2001 to 2008. Efforts to clean up the environment and reduce/eliminate toxins of all kinds are critical to the ongoing health of children.

Childhood obesity is one of the greatest threats to child and adult health that we are facing today. The risk of childhood obesity begins in utero and those risks include obesity of the mother during the pregnancy. Today in America, almost one-third of pregnant women are obese and among African-American mothers, the figure is closer to 50 percent. Obesity in the mother is a major risk factor for obesity in the child. On the other hand, children who are breast-fed are less likely to be obese and programs to increase breastfeeding need to continue in all populations.

In early childhood we have witnessed a dramatic increase in obesity and in the Surgeons General Report of 2001 we pointed out that between 1980 and 2000 obesity had doubled in children and tripled in adolescents. We call this an epidemic. Poor nutrition and increasingly sedentary lifestyles have spread from adults to children in the United States. Even our schools no longer require physical education in grades K–12 and are often not modeling good nutrition but contributing to the development of both the habits of sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition. It is almost as if home, school, and community have conspired to produce an epidemic of childhood obesity. This was our concern in *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001* as we called upon all of these sectors to work together in combating the epidemic of childhood obesity.

Not only are children who are overweight and obese more likely to be overweight and obese adults with increased risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer, but children who are overweight and obese are at increased risks for depression, diabetes, and hypertension. In addition, as we pointed out in the Action for Healthy Kids Report of 2005, entitled the *Learning Connection*, children who eat well and

are physically active learn and perform better on standardized exams in reading and math. These children are also better disciplined and less likely to be absent from school.

There are signs from recent CDC data that the epidemic of childhood obesity is plateauing but the battle must continue. It is much too early to declare any kind of victory in the battle against childhood obesity.

The Commission on Social Determinants of Health makes the following recommendation:

- Commit to and implement a comprehensive approach to early life, building on existing child survival programs and extending interventions in early life to include social/emotional and language/cognitive development.

I would like to close with the following thoughts and recommendations:

- As a nation we need to invest more in the health and well being of our children—our greatest natural resource.

- In our work to improve access to quality healthcare, pre- and perinatal care must receive priority attention. Damages in this period are usually irreversible.

- The role of parents and parenting is vital to child health and development especially mental/behavioral health and violence prevention.

- Our best hope for reversing the child obesity epidemic is to provide optimal environments of opportunity and motivation for regular physical activity and good nutrition.

- The most cost-effective investment that we can make in the health of children is to invest in improving the social determinants of health—education, safety, social inclusion and bonding to name a few.

There is no greater investment that a nation can make than to invest in the health of children and their early development. By so doing, we not only prevent diseases in childhood but most of the problems of adulthood including major disparities in health among different racial and socioeconomic groups.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Doctor, very much. And, thank you again, for your remarkable service and continuing service to our country; very, very valuable. You did a wonderful, wonderful job as Surgeon General.

Dr. SATCHER. Thank you.

Senator DODD. And, we still recall, with great admiration, your service and your contribution. So, thanks.

Helen Blank, we thank you once again for joining us. We'll get to you and Dr. Casserly here and we'll get to some questions.

STATEMENT OF HELEN BLANK, DIRECTOR, LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. BLANK. It is a special honor to be here today, Senator Dodd, 20 years after the enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. It took over 3 years, but you and Senator Hatch were steadfast. You never gave up.

And, after that, children in this country could count on you to lead every effort to increase investments in child care and Head Start.

I wish I could tell you that the glass was all full.

Despite our many efforts to provide better quality experiences for young children, we still haven't found the will to ensure that all our children, especially our most vulnerable, have them.

Frankly, the gap between the rhetoric and the reality is stunning, given the research, the support of our top economists and the growing public understanding of the importance of children's early years to our future.

You've listened to the debates. Do we focus on supporting families work or do we support early education? These are all inter-related goals. When parents do better, it's simple: children do bet-

ter. And children also do better when they get to be in high quality programs.

The Federal commitment is paramount. Unlike K-12, most policy makers don't recognize that the bulk of funds for early education are Federal, not State or local. For families, CCDBG is a lifeline. It reaches children up to age 13 for a full day and full year; and approximately 1.6 million children now receive help.

You might remember Sheila Merkison. She was the Maine mother who testified before you in 2002. She was on her State's child care waiting list. Sheila had left an abusive husband. She told this committee:

"The problem I'm facing is, although I believe my day care deserves every penny of it, my child care expenses are 48 percent of my weekly income. I see no other way to fully provide for my son if this program can't help us. I make \$18,000 a year. I'm asking for the ability to work, to provide for my son."

After testifying, which always seems to do the trick, Sheila received a child care subsidy when she went home. She wrote, just this week, that she wished that she could personally come to thank you on behalf of herself and of all the mothers helped by CCDBG.

"I've been working as an insurance agent for 8 years. My son is doing excellent. He was recently invited to test for the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search. I was able to buy a home. I honestly wouldn't have been able to accomplish this without child care assistance."

CCDBG quality dollars, many don't realize, also under-grades State early childhood systems. They fund programs that help child care providers go to school, and reward them for their efforts. They support program monitoring, resource and referral services, basic materials, and growing quality rating and improvement systems.

Head Start and Early Head Start, as you mentioned, are very important national building blocks. Early Head Start is our best effort at reaching infants and toddlers and their families. Head Start, as Senator Alexander pointed out, continues with the help of the reauthorization in 2007, to strengthen its standards, teacher credentials and monitoring.

State-funded pre-kindergarten is another positive development. However, programs primarily serve 4-year-olds for only part-day, part-year, and sometimes, part-week, leaving working parents scrambling to fill in the day.

State Early Childhood Advisory Councils, which you provided for in the Head Start reauthorization, facilitate collaboration across the system. While collaboration can encourage effective use of resources, it's not cost-free, and alone will not fill our gaps. Only one out of six children, eligible for Federal child care help receives it.

With all the families in those low-wage jobs that Peter talked about, we need more and more child care help.

Long waiting lists are common. California usually has about 200,000; Florida, when we originally were working on the child care bill, had about 25,000; now it's about 67,000. Denver has shut its child care program to low-income working families for the next 18 months. North Carolina has a great early childhood system, but almost 38,000 families on its waiting list. Arizona, since February

last year, has shrunk its child care program from 48,000 to 30,000 children.

Several States say now, unless you're on TANF we won't give you child care help.

States choose between serving families, asking parents to contribute more or paying child care providers less. Only six States pay rates that reflect the current cost of care. Less than half of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds are in Head Start, just 4 percent of eligible infants and toddlers are in Early Head Start. A crime, given what Dr. Satcher talked about in terms of the importance of brain development and stimulation in those early years.

Children are left with a patchwork of State standards, not even always guaranteeing their health and safety. Eight States don't require an annual monitoring visit for child care centers. California only visits centers once every 5 years. Child care workers' average annual wage is under \$21,000.

Many children get a good part of their nutrition in child care. Without access to the Child Care Food Program they're dependent on food brought from home that, in these tough times, is simply inadequate. Gaps in CACFP make it difficult for providers to offer the meals children need.

Our country needs to close these gaps by expanding access to these core programs. We need to help early childhood providers increase their education and compensation, ensure their resources for high-quality, full-day programs that address working parents' need for care—and children's—for early learning.

Coordination between early care programs in school should ensure that what children learn and the progress they make before school is reinforced after they enter school.

National and State groups have developed an agenda to guide Congress in a comprehensive reauthorization of CCDBG.

But there is a step, as Jennifer Garner has mentioned, that Congress must take now. We're at immediate risk of taking a giant step backwards in early childhood that we won't recover from. The fate of 300,000 children hangs in the balance. Without a bill that sustains the increases for child care and Head Start that were in ARRA, children and families and their providers are going to lose this help.

This is going to be devastating as they continue to struggle in this difficult economy, and as many State budgets remain in free fall.

Yes, along with this core funding, Congress should establish an early learning challenge fund.

Parents are always going to be their children's primary teachers, and always have the biggest role in their children's early learning, but they need more. Federal and State Governments need to step up now to close these gaps. If children miss out on these early learning opportunities that help them succeed in school and life, we are all going to lose out.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blank follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HELEN BLANK

SUMMARY

High-quality early care and education is essential for getting children the strong start they need to succeed in school and ultimately help make a positive contribution to our Nation's economy. It is also essential to help their parents work. Recognizing this, we have increased investments in early care and education over the past 20 years. Yet, we still haven't found the will to ensure that *all* our children, especially our most vulnerable children, have the early childhood opportunities they need. The Federal commitment is paramount. Unlike K-12 education, the bulk of public funds for child care and other early childhood programs are Federal, not State or local.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is a lifeline to families' ability to work as well as their children's ability to learn. It provides help to parents with children from birth up to age 13 for a full day and full year of child care. Approximately 1.6 million children receive help in paying for child care through the CCDBG each year.

CCDBG quality dollars also undergird State early childhood systems. The quality dollars help providers with the cost of going to school and attaining credentials as well as reward them for their efforts. The funds also support monitoring of programs to ensure children's health and safety, resource and referral services to help families searching for care, basic materials, and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which provide a pathway toward higher-quality child care.

Head Start has provided comprehensive services to more than 27 million of our Nation's poorest children and their families since 1965. Early Head Start represents our best efforts at reaching our poorest infants and toddlers and their families. Head Start continues to strengthen its program standards, teacher credential requirements, and monitoring efforts. In addition, State Early Childhood Advisory Councils are facilitating closer collaboration across all parts of the early childhood system.

At the State level, prekindergarten is an important development. It often comes with higher standards than child care. However, these programs are targeted primarily at 4-year-olds and fund only a part-year, part-day, and sometimes part-week, program in most communities.

There are still significant gaps to fill. Only one out of six children eligible for Federal child care help under CCDBG receives it. Many States have long waiting lists for child care assistance. States are forced to make Solomon-like choices between serving fewer families, asking parents receiving child care assistance to contribute more toward the cost of care, or paying child care providers lower rates. Less than half of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds and just 4 percent of eligible infants and toddlers can participate in Head Start and Early Head Start. Most States that have prekindergarten programs serve only a portion of their 4-year-olds, and even fewer of their 3-year-olds.

State licensing standards remain weak in far too many areas, from safety standards for facilities to staff-child ratio requirements. Eight States don't require an annual monitoring visit for child care centers. In 2009, the average annual wage for a child care worker was just \$20,940.

Many children get a good part of their daily nutrition in child care and early learning settings. Without access to CACFP, they are dependent on food brought from home that in these tough economic times is simply inadequate. Providers need additional resources to ensure continued access to CACFP benefits.

To close these gaps we should expand access to child care assistance, Head Start, Early Head Start, CACFP, and State prekindergarten programs. Opportunities and incentives for early childhood providers and teachers to increase their education and compensation should be explored. We need to ensure there are resources for high-quality, full-day programs that address both parents' need to have care for their children during their working hours and children's need for early learning opportunities. Coordination should be ensured between early care and education programs and school systems so that what children learn and the progress they make before they enter school is reinforced after they enter school.

There is a step that Congress must take now. The fate of 300,000 children receiving help from CCDBG and Head Start and Early Head Start hangs in the balance. Without a fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill that sustains the \$1 billion increase for child care and the \$1 billion increase for Head Start and Early Head Start that were provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, these children and families and their child care providers will lose the help they are currently receiving. This will be particularly devastating as they continue to struggle in this dif-

ficult economy and as many State budgets remain in free fall. Along with this core funding, Congress should also establish an Early Learning Challenge Fund that will encourage States to strengthen their early childhood systems and make effective use of their early childhood resources.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am Helen Blank, director of Leadership and Public Policy at the National Women's Law Center. What an honor to be here today 20 years after the enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). I want to give a special thanks to Senators Dodd and Hatch who helped champion the passage of this landmark support for children and families.

Since 1990, there has been increasing recognition and conversation about the importance of the early years. Despite many developments to provide better quality experiences for young children, we still haven't found the will to ensure that *all* our children, especially our most vulnerable children, have the early childhood opportunities they need. We owe our young children better. The gap between the rhetoric and the reality is stunning given the research, the support of our top economists, and the growing public understanding of the importance of our children's early years not only for school success, but our Nation's economic success. And with the current focus on deficit reduction, we face possible backsliding in our investments in young children and families that they cannot afford.

During the past 20 years, conversations have continued about what early childhood investments should accomplish. There has been debate about whether the focus should be on child care and early education's role as a support to help families work or as a support for child development, and whether the focus should be on increasing access to child care assistance and early education or increasing quality. In truth, these are all equally important and interrelated goals. When parents do better, children do better. We also know that there is a tremendous payoff when low-income children participate in high-quality early learning programs.

The Federal commitment is paramount. Unlike K-12 education, the bulk of public funds for child care and other early childhood programs are Federal, not State or local. In addition to CCDBG, our largest investment, there are several key Federal programs that low-income parents rely on: Head Start and Early Head Start, Preschool Grants under Part B Section 619 of IDEA, Grants for Infants and Families under Part C of IDEA, and now home visiting. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) helps ensure that children in these settings have access to nutritious meals and snacks during the day and offers technical assistance and training to isolated family child care providers. The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit helps some middle-income families as well by covering a portion of their child care costs.

All of these programs matter, but CCDBG is at the heart of the system. For families, CCDBG is a lifeline to their ability to work as well as their children's ability to learn. It provides help to parents with children from birth up to age 13 for a full day and full year of child care for those who need it. We have made a difference since 1990 when the CCDBG was enacted. Approximately 1.6 million children now receive help in paying for child care each year through CCDBG and funds transferred from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to CCDBG.¹ Additional families receive child care assistance through funding used directly within the TANF block grant.

You may remember Sheila Merkison, a Maine mother, who testified before the committee in 2002. She was on her State's waiting list for child care assistance. Sheila left her abusive husband and struggled with her child care costs. She told the committee,

"The problem I'm facing is, although I believe my day care deserves every penny of it, my child care expenses are 48 percent of my weekly net income. I see no other way to fully provide for my son if this program can't help us. I make \$18,000 a year ... I'm asking for the ability to work to provide for my son."

After testifying, Sheila did receive a child care subsidy. She wrote to me this week.

"I have been working as an Insurance Agent for 8 years now. My son is doing excellent. He was recently invited to test for the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search due to his high scores on the standardized tests at school. I was able to buy a home through the Rural Development agency a year ago. I honestly would not have been able to accomplish any of this without the child care assistance when I needed it."

CCDBG quality dollars also undergird early childhood systems in the States, supporting families at all income levels. The quality dollars help fund T.E.A.C.H.® and

other programs that help child care providers with the cost of going to school and attaining credentials as well as reward them for their efforts. The quality dollars are also used to support monitoring of programs, regardless of the income of the children served, to ensure their health and safety. In addition, the quality set-aside supports resource and referral services to help families searching for care and community child care programs, helps purchase basic materials, books, and equipment for family child care homes and centers, and assists in the costs associated with starting and operating Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which provide a pathway for providers toward higher-quality child care. These initiatives have made a difference. But, there continues to be, as a result of inadequate investment in child care, a constant tension between serving more eligible children and improving quality.

Head Start and Early Head Start are the other national building blocks in our early childhood system. Head Start has provided comprehensive services to more than 27 million of our Nation's poorest children and their families since 1965.² Early Head Start represents our best efforts at reaching our poorest infants and toddlers and their families. Head Start continues to strengthen its program standards, teacher credential requirements, and monitoring efforts. In addition, State Early Childhood Advisory Councils, which are authorized by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and are receiving initial funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, are facilitating even closer collaboration across all parts of the early childhood system.

At the State level, prekindergarten is an important and another positive development. It often comes with higher standards than child care. However, these programs are targeted primarily at 4-year-olds and fund only a part-year, part-day, and sometimes part-week, program in most communities. This leaves working parents scrambling to cover the remainder of the time. Innovative early childhood leaders have put State prekindergarten funding together with Early Head Start, Head Start, and child care dollars, as well as other Federal and State resources, to meet the needs of working families and to provide higher-quality care throughout the day and year.

Despite the growth of CCDBG, as well as the growth of Head Start, Early Head Start, and prekindergarten, there are still significant gaps to fill. And while coordination and collaboration and "systems building" can encourage these resources to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible in helping children and families, coordination and collaboration are not cost-free and alone will not fill those gaps.

ACCESS

We are reaching only a fraction of those who need access to early care and education opportunities, much less ensuring that those opportunities offer high-quality early care and education. Only one out of six children eligible for Federal child care help under CCDBG receives it.³ Many States have restrictive eligibility criteria, limiting child care assistance to only the lowest-income families. In 13 States, a family earning over 150 percent of poverty (\$27,465 a year for a family of three) cannot qualify for help in paying for child care.⁴ And in many States, even those families who are eligible are placed on long waiting lists for child care assistance. California usually has about 200,000 children on its waiting list.⁵ As of last February, Florida's waiting list had almost 67,000 children.⁶ Several States are now limiting child care assistance to families who are receiving, or were recently receiving, TANF.

With limited funding, States are forced to make Solomon-like choices between serving fewer families, asking parents receiving child care assistance to contribute more toward the cost of care, or paying child care providers who serve subsidized families lower rates. Only six States pay reimbursement rates to child care providers that reflect the current cost of care in their communities.⁷ With such low rates, child care providers that serve families receiving child care assistance must make sacrifices as they stretch their already tight budgets. Families receiving child care assistance may have difficulty finding a high-quality child care provider willing to accept the low reimbursement rates. Families can also confront numerous hurdles in the process of applying for and renewing their eligibility for child care assistance. This makes it more challenging for parents to retain the child care assistance they need to get and keep a job, which creates more chaos in the lives of children who desperately need stable early childhood experiences.

For too many of our most vulnerable children, Head Start and Early Head Start remain out of reach. Less than half of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds have the opportunity to participate in Head Start.⁸ And just 4 percent of eligible infants and toddlers are enrolled in Early Head Start.⁹ Most States that have prekindergarten programs serve only a portion of their 4-year-olds, and even fewer of their 3-year-olds.

QUALITY ASSURANCES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Another major gap is in ensuring the basic health and safety of children in child care. There has been scant support in Congress for Federal child care standards. This has left children with a patchwork of standards that do not always guarantee their health and safety. State licensing standards remain weak in far too many areas, from safety standards for facilities to staff-child ratio requirements. Eight States don't require an annual monitoring visit for child care centers, including California, where 5 years can pass between licensing visits, according to a study by the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.¹⁰ Yet, States—facing budget crises of their own—do not currently have the resources to expand their licensing systems, and are typically reluctant to strengthen their standards out of concern that doing so would increase costs for child care providers operating on tight margins, which would force them to increase their fees, which would only put the cost of care further out of reach for more parents.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

We will also continue to struggle to improve child care unless we address the training, education, and compensation of the early childhood workforce. In 2009, the average annual wage for a child care worker was just \$20,940.¹¹ With such low wages, it will continue to be difficult if not impossible to attract and retain good teachers for our early learning programs.

CHILD NUTRITION

Many children get a good part of their daily nutrition in child care and early learning settings. Without access to CACFP, they are dependent on food brought from home that in these tough economic times is simply inadequate. Yet, reimbursement levels for meals is insufficient to ensure that providers have the resources to provide meals and snacks that meet the newly recommended standards from the Institute of Medicine. While young children eat small portions but frequently, Federal funds do not provide enough for a second snack during a long child care day. Family child care providers have less and less access to CACFP and the sponsors that work with them do not have the necessary resources to support providers. Pending Child Nutrition reauthorization does not adequately address the Child and Adult Care Food Program and it is possible that it will actually result in fewer providers and children having access to its benefits.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our country needs to move forward to close these lingering gaps in our early childhood system. We should expand access to child care assistance, Head Start, Early Head Start, CACFP, and State prekindergarten programs. We need to provide opportunities and incentives for early childhood providers and teachers to increase their education and compensation. We need to make sure there are resources for high-quality, full-day programs that address both parents' need to have care for their children during their working hours and children's need for early learning opportunities. We need to ensure there is coordination between early care and education programs and school systems so that what children learn and the progress they make before they enter school is reinforced after they enter school.

In the long term, we need a national agenda. National and State organizations focused on children and families have developed such an agenda—the Agenda for Affordable, High-Quality Child Care—that can guide the Congress in enacting a comprehensive reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (and which we request be included in the hearing record).

However, there is a step that Congress must take now. Despite the consensus about the importance of the early years for all children, we are at immediate risk of taking a giant step backwards. The fate of 300,000 children receiving help from CCDBG and Head Start and Early Head Start hangs in the balance. Without a fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill that sustains the \$1 billion increase for child care and the \$1 billion increase for Head Start and Early Head Start that were provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, these children and families and their child care providers will lose the help they are currently receiving. This will be particularly devastating as they continue to struggle in this difficult economy and as many State budgets remain in free fall. Along with this core funding, Congress should also establish an Early Learning Challenge Fund that will encourage States to strengthen their early childhood systems and make effective use of their early childhood resources.

Parents will always be their children's primary teachers, and they will always have the biggest role to play in their children's early learning experiences. But they need your support. Federal and State Governments still need to step up to close these gaps. Because if children miss out on these early learning opportunities that help them succeed in school, we all lose out. Let's take this opportunity to build a stronger early childhood system for our children, and for our future.

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¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Care and Development Fund Statistics, FY 2008 CCDF Data Tables (Preliminary Estimates), Table 1: Child Care and Development Fund Preliminary Estimates Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served (FFY 2008), available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/data/ccdf_data/08acf800_preliminary/table1.htm.

²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Head Start Program Fact Sheet FY 2010, available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/about/fy2010.html>.

³U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Services Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2006 (April 2010), available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/10/cc-eligibility/ib.shtml>.

⁴Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, State Child Care Assistance Policies 2010: New Federal Funds Help States Weather the Storm (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2010), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/statechildcareassistancepoliciesreport2010.pdf>.

⁵Schulman and Blank.

⁶Schulman and Blank.

⁷Schulman and Blank.

⁸Calculations based on data on Head Start enrollment from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start and data on children in poverty by single year of age from the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁹Calculations based on data on Early Head Start enrollment from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start and data on children in poverty by single year of age from the U.S. Census Bureau.

¹⁰National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, We CAN Do Better: 2009 Update. NACCRRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulation and Oversight (Washington, DC: NACCRRRA, 2009), available at http://www.nacerra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/publications/We%20Can%20Better%202009_MECH-screen.pdf.

¹¹U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2009 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, available at http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm.

DEVELOPING AMERICA'S POTENTIAL

An Agenda for Affordable, High-Quality Child Care

Developing America's Potential: An Agenda for Affordable High-Quality Child Care is the product of a historic collaboration of national and State organizations to craft a shared "blueprint" for the future of child care. It offers a solid framework for guiding the reauthorization for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and other opportunities for child care improvement in the new Administration and new Congress.

The Agenda recognizes that high-quality child care helps children, families and communities prosper. It helps children learn and develop skills they need to succeed in school and in life. It gives parents the support and peace of mind they need to be productive at work. And it helps our Nation stay competitive, by producing a stronger workforce now and in the future. But for many families—especially, but not only, low-income families—high-quality child care is unaffordable or unattainable. The Agenda for Affordable, High-Quality Child Care proposes comprehensive, systemic reforms to ensure safe, healthy and affordable child care that promotes early learning and increased Federal funding to make these reforms possible.

SECTION A: ENSURING HEALTHY AND SAFE CARE

To ensure that all child care meets basic health and safety and child development standards, mandatory Federal funding for the CCDBG will be sufficiently expanded, and States will be required within 3 years to use this funding to:

- Have written health and safety standards appropriate to the setting of the provider and the age of the children that apply to all child care centers and family child care homes caring for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis. At a minimum, these standards must address requirements for first-aid, CPR, sanitation procedures and control of communicable disease, child abuse identification and reporting, background screenings, prevention of sudden infant death syndrome, emergency and disaster procedures, medication administration, and basic child guidance policies.
- Require all providers in child care centers and family child care homes caring for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis to have at least 40 hours of appropriate and accessible health and safety and child development training, including training on State early learning guidelines and information about working with children with disabilities and other special needs, before providing care to children, and 24 hours annually thereafter.
- Ensure that all children in child care centers and family child care homes receiving care from a provider not related to the child for a fee on a regular basis receive a developmental screening by qualified professionals and referrals for appropriate services when they enter care.
- Inspect and monitor all providers in child care centers and family child care homes caring for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis at least twice a year with one or more on an unannounced basis to ensure compliance with these requirements.

To support child care facilities, Federal funding will be authorized to:

- Establish an ongoing pool of capital for the renovation and construction of facilities in low-income communities, including those serving families with limited English proficiency.

This pool will be accessed through experienced non-profit facilities intermediaries that may use the funds to make grants and loans to child care providers for this facility renovation and construction, and to provide technical assistance on facility design and development.

SECTION B: MAKING CARE MORE AFFORDABLE

To ensure that parents have access to a range of child care services, mandatory Federal funding for the CCDBG will be sufficiently expanded, and States will be required to use this funding to:

- Provide federally funded child care assistance sufficient to double the number of children currently served nationwide.
- Until the Quality Rating and Improvement System described in section C is in effect, establish maximum base reimbursement rates for providers caring for children receiving federally funded child care assistance at no less than the 75th percentile of the current market rate, based on a market rate survey that is conducted at least annually and that is statistically valid and reliable and reflects cost variations by geography, age of children, and provider type.
- Develop and implement strategies such as higher payment rates and bonuses, direct contracting, grants, or other means of increasing the supply of care in particular areas of the State or for particular categories of children, such as care in low-income and rural areas, care for infants and toddlers, school-age children, children with disabilities and other special needs, and children in families with limited English proficiency, and care during non-standard hours, if shortages of these types of care are identified, and report annually to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on how these strategies are being used to expand the supply of this care.
- Set a 1-year eligibility determination period for child care assistance.
- Support a computer system to streamline administration of the State's child care assistance program.
- Ensure that State payment practices for child care providers reflect generally accepted payment policies that providers use for their private-paying parents.
- Provide grants to community-based organizations with expertise in serving populations with limited English proficiency to develop and implement effective outreach models to help eligible families learn about and obtain child care assistance.

To expand assistance available through the Federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the credit will be improved through the following changes:

- To help low-income families, the credit will be made refundable.
- To help middle-income families, the sliding scale for determining the amount of the credit will be expanded so that it begins at 50 percent of expenses for families with incomes of \$35,000 or less.
- To help all families, the current expense limits of the credit will be maintained at no less than \$3,000 for one child or dependent and \$6,000 for two or more children or dependents.
- To preserve the credit's value, it will be indexed for inflation.

SECTION C: IMPROVING QUALITY TO PROMOTE EARLY LEARNING

To improve the quality of care above the basic standards described in Section A, mandatory Federal funding for the CCDBG will be sufficiently expanded to provide States with additional resources so that States have the funding to invest in each of the following required activities:

- Financial support for providers and programs to meet expenses necessary to achieve and maintain the standards and training requirements established by Section A, and to become licensed and regulated, with a priority for low-income providers and programs in low-income communities.
- Establishment and operation of a statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) within 5 years for all child care centers and family child care homes providing care for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis and other early childhood education program settings as the State determines.
 - The QRIS must rate providers according to the quality of care they provide, based on the extent to which they meet criteria appropriate for each age group such as: an early learning environment that promotes children's development and school readiness and that is linguistically and culturally appropriate, appropriate staff-child ratios and group size, staff qualifications and education credentials and staff compensation, opportunities for parent involvement, regular program evaluation, inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs, and safe physical environment.
 - The quality ratings must be tiered, beginning at the level of quality needed for providers to become licensed or regulated, and increasing in quality to reach nationally recognized high program standards.
 - The maximum reimbursement rate for providers caring for children receiving federally funded child care assistance in each quality tier included in the QRIS must be based on no less than the 75th percentile of the current market rate for that tier of care, based on a market survey that is conducted at least annually and that is statistically valid and reliable and reflects cost variations by geography, age of children, and provider type.
 - The QRIS must include support for a credentialing and compensation program that includes grants to assist individual providers/teachers in child care centers and family child care homes providing care for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis in obtaining the training, credentials, and degrees required by each level of the QRIS standards and the State's prekindergarten program, and increases their compensation based on their level of education, with preference given to providers/teachers in centers in which a significant share of children served are receiving federally funded child care assistance and homes that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
 - The QRIS must include grants to assist child care centers and family child care homes serving children receiving federally funded child care assistance in achieving and maintaining the progressively higher quality program standards of the QRIS (other than those standards that address provider/teacher credentialing and compensation), with preference given to centers in which a significant share of children served are receiving federally funded child care assistance and homes that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
 - The QRIS must include support for programs to train and mentor individual providers/teachers in child care centers and family child care homes providing care for at least one child not related to the provider for a fee on a regular basis in achieving and maintaining the progressively higher quality standards of the QRIS, with preference given to providers/teachers in centers in which a significant share of children served are receiving federally funded child care assistance and providers in homes that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

- States must report annually to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, starting 1 year after the QRIS is implemented, on:
 - The quality standards that are necessary to meet the requirements for each tier in the State's QRIS.
 - The numbers and percent of all children and of children receiving federally funded child care assistance who are receiving care from providers in each quality tier, by children's age, children's race/ethnicity, and the extent to which children have limited English proficiency.
 - The number and percent of providers that have moved up at least one quality tier in the QRIS from the previous year, including the number and percent of those providers who are in low-income communities.
 - The strategies used by the State to increase the number and percent of providers offering, and children receiving, care in progressively higher quality tiers.
- Support for a statewide network of child care resource and referral programs.
- Additional supports to improve the quality of care.

To improve the quality of services to children and families who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency, Federal funding will be authorized for grants or contracts to:

- Develop, implement, and demonstrate the effectiveness of techniques and approaches for training child care providers with limited English proficiency to provide high-quality child care.

Grants or contract will be awarded on a competitive basis to community-based organizations with experience and expertise in providing training to child care providers with limited English proficiency.

To improve the quality of services to children with disabilities and other special needs and their families, Federal funding will be authorized for grants or contracts to:

- Develop, implement, and demonstrate the effectiveness of techniques and approaches for training child care providers to provide high-quality care for such children.

Grants or contracts will be awarded on a competitive basis to community-based organizations with experience and expertise in providing training to child care providers to meet the needs of children with disabilities and other special needs in community child care programs.

SECTION D: IMPROVING AND EXPANDING INFANT AND TODDLER CARE

To address the shortage of high-quality infant and toddler care, mandatory Federal funding for the CCDBG will be sufficiently expanded to provide States with significant new resources to expand the supply of high-quality infant and toddler care through each of the following activities:

- Grants to establish and operate neighborhood- or community-based family and child development centers to provide high-quality, comprehensive child care and development services to infants and toddlers. Grantees must be child care providers ranked at the top level of a State's QRIS. Priority for grants is given to centers in low-income communities.
- Grants to organizations to establish and operate neighborhood- or community-based family child care networks and/or offer technical assistance to parents and other infant-toddler child care providers, including relative caregivers. Priority for grants is given to organizations in low-income communities, including communities with significant populations of families who have limited English proficiency.
- Grants to an organization to support a statewide network of infant and toddler specialists to provide individual and/or group training and intensive consultation to child care centers, family child care homes, and relative caregivers on strategies to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers, especially infants and toddlers in families who are eligible for federally funded child care assistance.

SECTION E: SUPPORTING RESEARCH, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND COORDINATION

To provide technical assistance and other support, mandatory Federal funding for the CCDBG will be sufficiently expanded, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services will be required to ensure that the following activities are conducted:

- Within 2 years, the National Academy of Sciences will conduct a study and report to Congress on the actual cost per child of a full-year, full-day program of high-quality early care and education program that promotes the sound development of

children, by age of child from birth to age 13, and by type of setting (center-based or family child care program), taking into consideration the additional costs of serving children with disabilities and other special needs.

- The Department of Health and Human Services will provide technical assistance to States on developing and conducting statistically valid and reliable market rate surveys and identify acceptable approaches for States to use in developing and conducting market rate surveys.

- The Department of Health and Human Services will identify acceptable approaches and criteria for States to use in developing each quality tier of the QRIS and provide technical assistance to States in developing their QRIS.

- Each State every 5 years will conduct a study, applying methodology established by the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure comparability of data across States, and the Secretary shall, using the data submitted by each State, report to Congress every 5 years on the characteristics of the workforce providing child care and development services to children birth to age 13, by age group served, geographic area, quality rating, type of care (including child care center, family child care home, prekindergarten, Head Start, and school-age care) and other significant variables, including providers' race and ethnicity, language status, credentials and training received, experience working in the field, and salary and benefits.

To streamline, coordinate, and improve the effectiveness of child care and early education services and programs at the Federal and State levels:

- The State child care plan for the CCDBG will be submitted to the State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education for comment before the plan is submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services for funding. The plan must describe coordination among child care, Head Start, State prekindergarten programs, and Part C and Section 619 programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including the ways in which Federal and State resources are to be used to help child care providers meet the State prekindergarten requirements and to help children enrolled in part-day prekindergarten and Head Start programs receive full-day services.

- An Office of Early Care and Learning will be established within the Administration for Children and Families, and will house both the Head Start Bureau and the Child Care Bureau.

- An Interagency Early Learning and After-School Council will be established, chaired by the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education, to coordinate Federal funding for child care and development programs and services for children birth to age 13 across the Federal agencies that provide such funding.

(Developed and endorsed by American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Center for Law and Social Policy; The Children's Project; Early Care and Education Consortium; National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies; National Association for Family Child Care; National Council of La Raza; National Women's Law Center; Service Employees International Union; and Zero to Three)

Senator DODD. Helen, once again thank you immensely; and so articulate; wonderful to hear that story about that woman from Maine. It's nice to hear that things actually work out. Those efforts—you wonder whether or not the results produce the kinds of events that you describe.

Ms. BLANK. She says so. She also ran the 5K and graduated with honors from junior college.

Senator DODD. Very good, I tell you. All because of the child care development.

Ms. BLANK. I didn't ask her to say that.

Senator DODD. Dr. Casserly, thank you so much for joining us today. You've been very patient.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CASSERLY, Ph.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNCIL ON GREAT CITY SCHOOLS, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. CASSERLY. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the invitation to be here.

I join with my colleagues this morning in thanking you for your outstanding contributions to the lives—

Senator DODD. I appreciate it.

Mr. CASSERLY [continuing]. Of so many children and families across this country. Thank you. We honor you and the work that you have done.

I'm Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, the Nation's primary coalition of large urban school systems.

And, to give you some sense of what a family affair this gathering is, our organization was founded by Sargent Shriver in 1956, when he was president of the school board in Chicago.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen substantial progress in the education of our Nation's children over the decades you have served on this panel, despite the work that is still in front of us.

In addition to the landmark Family and Medical Leave Act and expansions of the Head Start Program, you have played a critical role in the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Act, and its successor, IDEA; untold reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and student loan expansions.

You have also been a strong proponent of Early Childhood Education, State school finance equity and afterschool programming. And, you were the first legislator to stand with us in calling for national math and science standards, which eventually morphed into the Common Core Standards that are now in place in so many States.

All of this legislation has been important in expanding the opportunities for historically underserved populations and in boosting student achievement.

Nowhere is this more evident than in our Nation's urban public schools. The number of large-city students reading at the proficient level or better on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, for instance, has increased by 35 percent among fourth graders since 2002; and the number of students scoring below basic levels has dropped by 18 percent.

In addition, the reading gap between the large cities and the Nation narrowed by one-third between 2002 and 2009.

The gains are more substantial in math. In fact, the number of large central city students scoring at the proficient level or better, has increased by 45 percent among fourth graders and 50 percent among 8th graders. And, we have decreased the number of students scoring below basic levels by 24 percent.

Still, we are far behind, and our racially identifiable achievement gaps are way too wide.

Congress and this committee, in particular, should feel proud of its work over many years because it set the stage for these academic gains.

In fact, Congress has been especially effective in articulating issues and defining priorities and then building a legislative infrastructure around those priorities, including an emphasis on the instruction of poor children, students with disabilities and English learners.

Congress has also been particularly effective in targeting its scarce resources on school districts with the largest concentrations of need.

This targeting of funds has been critical to the ability of struggling schools to overcome the effects of poverty and other barriers. The Nation's urban schools, in particular, have benefited from this targeting and have used these dollars to help spur the gains I have described.

The Federal Government's continued support for the concentration of limited dollars in high-need communities is one of the wisest investments it can make.

The Federal Government's work, in addition, to ensure civil rights and to conduct research on what works in education has also been important.

Congress' efforts to build more accountability into public education has been critical.

But there is still considerably more work to do. Research, in particular, needs to be expanded to better support school systems that are facing special challenges that they can't solve by themselves, including research on adolescent literacy, English acquisition amongst children, reading comprehension, and teacher quality, to name but a few.

There are also new national educational priorities that Congress should consider as it moves forward. Despite our rhetorical attention to science, for example, the Nation's efforts in this area lack coherence and direction. Congress could change that.

At one point, Congress also had a dropout prevention program, but eventually it abandoned that effort. The Nation, however, continues to lose too many young people before they attain a high school diploma.

During the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Congress should re-focus on dropout prevention along with Secondary School Reform.

Research is also clear on the benefits of early childhood education, but we can't seem to muster the public will to create a system that ensures that all of our children are served.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to call your attention to a report that my organization released last week, called "A Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban Schools."

I ask that it be included in the record.

[The material referenced above may be found at www.edweek.org/media/black_male_study.pdf.]

It looks at the academic well-being and college and career readiness of America's African-American male youth; and the results are not anything that we should be proud of as a Nation.

On almost every indicator of well-being we looked at, our Black male young people were coming up on the short end despite the fact that many city school districts were showing progress.

We found that Black children were over twice as likely as white children to live in a household where no parent had year-round or full-time employment. Black children were three times more likely to be raised in families living in poverty than other children.

Black male fourth graders, Nationwide, were over three times less likely to read and do math at proficient levels than white males.

Black males were about twice as likely to drop out of school, were less likely to take advanced placement exams, and scored some 100 percent lower than others on SAT exams. If these students make it into college, they are far less likely to graduate.

At the end of this progression are unemployment rates among African-American males that are twice as high as white males, and imprisonment rates that are 6.5 times higher.

Congress may not be able to solve all of the complicated issues surrounding this situation, but it is hard to believe that additional focus on this issue would not pay enormous dividends.

That America squanders so much of its human talent does not bode well for our ability to maintain our global pre-eminence economically, financially, politically or morally.

The great civil rights battles that you and Marian and others on this panel fought were not fought so our children could have access to mediocrity or failure. They were fought so our children could have access to excellence and the resources to pay for them.

Congress should be proud of the work that it's done over the decades to improve access to, and the quality of public education in this Nation, but we still have so much more to do.

Thank you very much, and I'd be happy to take any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Casserly follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CASSERLY, PH.D.

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to testify before this subcommittee. I join many others today in recognizing and thanking Chairman Chris Dodd for your outstanding contributions to this committee and to the lives of so many children and families across the country. Thank you.

I am Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, the Nation's primary coalition of large urban school systems.

Our 65 member urban school districts, which comprise less than 1 percent of the Nation's 15,000 school systems, enroll some 30 percent of the country's students of color, English learners, and poor students.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen enormous progress in the education of our Nation's children over the decades you have served on this important panel.

In addition to the landmark Family and Medical Leave Act and expansions to the critically important Headstart program, you have played a critical role in the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Act and its successor IDEA; the Eisenhower Math and Science program; the Magnet School Program; untold numbers of reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; the overhaul of the Bilingual Education Act, and student loan expansions. You have also been a strong proponent of early childhood education, State school finance equity, and afterschool programming. And you were one of the first legislators to stand with us in calling for national math and science standards in education.

All of this legislation has played an important role in expanding opportunities for historically underserved populations and in boosting student achievement. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Nation's major urban public schools.

The number of large-city students reading at the proficient level or better on NAEP has increased by 35 percent among 4th graders since 2002. And, the number of 4th graders scoring below the basic level dropped by 18 percent between 2002 and 2009.

In addition, the reading gap between the large cities and the Nation narrowed by one-third between 2002 and 2009. We are now just 10-scale score points away from national averages at both 4th and 8th grade levels. We are not only improving; we are catching up.

The gains are even more substantial in math. In fact, the number of large central city students scoring at the proficient level or better on math has *increased* by 45

percent among 4th graders and 50 percent among 8th graders since 2003. And we have *decreased* the number of urban students scoring below basic levels by 24 percent.

Between 2003 and 2009, our large central city schools have narrowed the gap in math with the Nation by 20 percent in both 4th and 8th grades.

Congress and this committee, in particular, should feel proud of the work it has done over many years, because it set the stage for these academic gains. It has been especially effective in articulating issues and defining priorities, and then building a legislative infrastructure around those priorities, including an emphasis on the instruction of poor children, students with disabilities, and English learners.

Congress has also been effective in targeting its scarce resources on school districts and schools with the largest concentrations of need. This targeting of funds, particularly under Title I, Title II, and Title III of ESEA, are critical to the ability of struggling schools to overcome the effects of poverty and other barriers.

The Nation's urban schools have benefited from this targeting and have used these dollars to help spur the gains I just described. The Federal Government's continued support for the concentration of limited dollars on high-need urban and rural communities is one of the wisest investments it can make.

The Federal Government's work to ensure civil rights and to conduct research on what works in elementary and secondary education has also been important, although clearly much more needs to be done.

Finally, Congress's efforts to build more accountability for results into public education have also been important, although they were hampered by the fact that not everyone was being held accountable to the same standards—something that the new common core should solve in time.

There is still considerably more work to be done, however, even in an era when the public is rethinking the Federal role in education.

Research, in particular, needs to be expanded to better support school systems that are facing special challenges they are not necessarily able to solve by themselves, including new research on adolescent literacy, English acquisition, instructional interventions, reading comprehension, and teacher quality and incentives—to name but a few.

We know surprisingly little, for instance, about why some teachers are more effective instructionally than others. Nor do we have a firm grip on how to boost the effectiveness of teachers after their 5th year or so in the classroom.

Considerable research is also needed on effective instructional strategies to boost reading comprehension, particularly with students in grades 4–8. Nationwide, NAEP reading scores in the 8th grade have been surprisingly flat for many years, and educators have been left without much direction about what to do about it.

There are also national educational priorities that Congress should consider as it moves forward. Despite our rhetorical attention to science, for example, the Nation's efforts to address our deficiencies in this area continue to lack coherence, definition, and leadership. Congress could change that.

At one point, Congress made dropout prevention a legislative priority, but abandoned the program after considerable squabbling about how it was structured. The Nation, however, continues to lose too many young people before they can attain a high school diploma, much to their economic and social detriment and the Nation's.

During the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, Congress should consider an effort that focuses exclusively on dropout prevention, research, and demonstration—along with secondary school reform.

The research is also quite clear on the benefits of early childhood education, but we can't seem to muster the public will to create a system—public and private—that ensures that all children who need services can receive them.

Finally, I want to call your attention to a report that my organization released last week—“A Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban Schools.”

It looks at the academic well-being and college and career readiness of America's African-American male youth. And the results are not anything we should be proud of as a nation.

On almost every indicator we looked at—spanning infant mortality to career advancement—our Black male young people were coming up on the short end, despite the fact that many city school systems—like Atlanta, Boston, New York, Baltimore, and others—were showing substantial progress.

We found that Black children were over twice as likely to live in a household where no parent has year-round, full-time employment.

Black children are three times more likely to be raised in a family living in poverty than white children.

Black male 4th graders nationwide were over three times less likely to read and do math at proficient levels than white males nationwide.

Black males are about twice as likely to drop out of school; are less likely to take advanced placement exams; and score on average over 100 points lower than white males on SAT college-entrance exams.

If these students make it into postsecondary education, they are far less likely to graduate in 4, 5, or 6 years than white males.

At the end of this progression—when the cycle begins anew—are unemployment rates among African-American males that are twice as high as for white males, and imprisonment rates that are 6.5 times higher for Black males than for white males.

Congress may not be able to solve the complicated issues surrounding this situation, but it is hard to believe that additional thinking and investment in this issue and the problem of high school dropouts would not pay enormous dividends for the Nation in both the short and long term.

That America squanders so much of its human talent does not bode well for the Nation's ability to maintain its global pre-eminence economically, financially, politically, or morally.

Congress should be very proud of the efforts it has made over the decades to improve the access to and the quality of public education in this Nation. But we still have so much more to do.

Thank you and I'd be happy to take your questions.

Senator DODD. Well, thank you, Doctor. And, thank you for your work as well; tremendously helpful and tremendously valuable.

We're fortunate on this committee, we've got my good friend, Michael Bennet, who ran the school district in Denver, CO, and has brought already tremendous wealth and talent and ability to the discussion that is ongoing with the Obama administration on educational reform.

I only regret I won't be around to watch that develop but I've got a lot of confidence in Senator Bennet leading that effort here, and along with others, to see that we move in the right direction.

I'm going to ask a couple of broad questions as far as your comments. There's an awful lot you've said, just in terms of the realities we're looking at here.

We've got this Commission on Deficit Reduction, which is obviously getting a lot of attention in the news, and the change in the political dynamic in the institution of this building now with the House under the control of one set of hands, the Senate in another, pulling all of this together.

There's an awful lot that goes on. A lot of silos that we talk about here at the Federal level, and how we weave these together in some sort of a coordinated fashion.

Helen said something which I, in reading over your testimony, was struck with and that I agree with. It comes down to almost a simple sentence, in my view, in many ways. If families are doing well, children do well. I mean, maybe it's an over simplification, but if you had to get to one single point, if a family's got a job, which is a decent paying job—I've often said maybe a million times in 30 years, the best social program ever created was a good, decent paying job. An awful lot happens when that occurs.

Peter, your statistics on what's happened to our economy—Bernie's points before he left a few minutes ago, in his opening comments about just the de-industrialization of America and this gap that has existed with the lack of economic opportunity and upward mobility, both individually, as a country, are deeply worrying and disturbing.

I wonder if you might comment again—not so much for me, but for our staffs who are here and others, to wet the appetite to want

to do this and get this right. It may vary to some degree, but everyone understands this. The question is, how do we weave this together in a way that avoids the silo approach to it, that would give us the opportunity to have a more coordinated effort to focus on these questions?

Marian, let me begin with you, if I can. That's really to break down those silos—and how can Congress help change its thinking about these problems in a way that gives them the opportunity to understand that what they're doing is not just slicing pieces off of this, but gives them a sense of the whole.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Well, I think looking at the whole child is very important.

Senator DODD. Yes.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. And, again, children don't come in pieces; they come in families. Families need jobs and a range of support to do a good job. Families are affected by the policies of their communities and their local and State governments.

Children don't come in pieces, either, as they grow up. We need a continuum of care from before birth up through adulthood; and we keep grabbing onto one piece of it—

Senator DODD. Yes.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN [continuing]. And we try to repair the ankle and then say, why is the whole child not good. Or, we repair this little piece. Good policy should be like good parenting. There's no parent who would give their child safety and not give them a roof over their heads or good food.

That's why we've been in—and you have been very helpful in this in trying to talk about a comprehensive act to really leave no child behind, but that means really providing the kind of comprehensive, continuous care that protects children in the context of their families, and that gets them from before birth through transition to adulthood.

We know how to do it, and we should really model it on what every parent wants with their child. There are a lot of pieces in place, but we need to now make it more systematic.

I would really like to see us put together now a child emergency investment bill that really talks about what we do in eliminating poverty, creating jobs for parents, but giving them the prenatal care, because millions of our children are sort of, born with two or three strikes against them.

Senator DODD. Yes.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. And then they don't get the early education and so we have to get them born healthy with prenatal care, we've got to make sure they all get the preventative health and mental health care, and we need to make sure that they are ready for school; and in those early years, we need to make sure that every school is ready and expects every child to learn; and we need to make sure that they have stimulating, after-school time and summertime, because they can't be idle. Give them what we want for our own children. They need to have work experiences and service experiences. I mean, we've got all these disconnected youth who have never seen work, and never seen anybody work.

Senator DODD. No.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. And, so we know what to do. The question is, how do we get that kind of comprehensive vision? And, we may have to renovate the whole house, room by room, but we should start. But, we should have that vision of a whole house that is safe for all children.

Senator DODD. Does anyone else want to comment on this at this point?

Mr. EDELMAN. Just briefly.

Senator DODD. Peter.

Mr. EDELMAN. Senator, I would remind everybody of something that you did during the Clinton administration. My fond memory of it is that it originated in a conversation at our house, but you—

Senator DODD. As many, many ideas did.

Mr. EDELMAN [continuing]. You proposed, and got enacted An Ounce of Prevention Council in the Federal Government. And, I would suggest going back to that, and for the Senators who remain on the staff, to work on something that puts real teeth in making the departments of the Federal Government connect to each other and pools resources, so that it deals with whole children and families, and so that it incentivizes and pushes people at the local level to pull together the relevant public agencies and the relevant private participation in it, so, just to revive that and reinvent it.

Second, it just reminds me to say something about the compartmentalization of the debate that's taking place between education and poverty, because I'm kind of sick of it. Where we've got these dueling statements—and we've got one side saying, which I think is correct, and I don't know why everybody doesn't agree—that we don't attack both what's going on in the schools and have reform of what's happening in the schools, and see to it that children are living in families that have adequate incomes and they're not coming to school hungry, if we don't do both of those things, we're going to keep on losing.

Senator DODD. I agree, too. You know, I wanted to make this—we're always having, in a family of teachers—a sister of mine just finished 40 years of early childhood work in the city of Hartford. In the last school she was in they were using a lot of the early Montessori techniques which she developed back in the 1950s at Whitby School in Greenwich with Nancy Rambusch and others who were pioneers in the efforts to incorporate some of those ideas. We overload them.

The notion of connecting the family with the educational process—and I realize teachers get resistant to this notion idea—I've often wondered why we don't do a better job of asking teachers to become more knowledgeable about the families from which the child comes when they enter that classroom. They sit down at that school desk in the morning. That child has come from someplace.

And, at the end of that day, they're going back to someplace. And that someplace has a profound, profound effect on what happens during those 5 or 6 hours that that child is sitting in front of you.

The fact that there seems to be so little effort to really understand what the circumstances are that that child has left; maybe without a breakfast, maybe an abusive situation, maybe a violence-ridden neighborhood; all going back to that as well, and then won-

dering why that child isn't performing as well, or lacks the skill sets and so forth.

It seems to me unless you start making that nexus and creating that connection, No. 1, I think it does a tremendous amount of advancing the quality of the education of the child, but also raising a little awareness, within an educational setting, of where these children are coming from and what they're facing. I don't mean just in poor neighborhoods. This can be a problem in affluent neighborhoods. It isn't just a question of economics. It can be a lot of other things occurring.

I wonder if you might, Dr. Casserly, quickly—and then I'm going to turn to my colleagues, because I've spent a lot of time talking and chatting here, so I want to hear them. They're going to be carrying the ball, anyway, from here, so they ought to be asking the questions.

Mr. CASSERLY. Let me go back to your original question about silo behavior and maybe Congress' role in that. I'm not always convinced that silos are the problem; and heaven knows, at least in the education arena we have lots of silo-like behavior that we're constantly having to fight against. That's why I'm not necessarily the right person to address this issue.

Sometimes Congress can actually contribute to the issue by passing lots of very small programs that don't necessarily have broader priority or support, that actually contribute to some of the silo-like behavior once you get down to the State and local level, and everybody then has a stake in trying to protect that individual little piece.

If a program is important enough to pass, it may be important enough to either be large enough or to be folded into some larger, more systemic effort of the kind that Marian is talking about.

Senator DODD. Yes, that's a good point. Well, I'll go to my colleagues that have shown up here. Bob, I think you were grabbing the gavel over here a little prematurely, I thought, from me.

[Laughter.]

Bob Casey has been a terrific friend and all—early, early on when he first arrived here he approached me and said that he really, really wanted to get involved in these issues. A great, great asset to us; and did a lot of work before he arrived, on these issues as well.

I say this to my colleagues here: I thought your opening comments were just right on, as they always are, in my view. And, I mentioned already, Michael and former Speaker in Oregon who brings great knowledge to these issues in some of the States, Jeff Merkley.

I'm going to be disappointed, I'm not here—I'll be less than honest if I didn't say—but, I'm very, very excited about the people who are here. I care about this very much. There's four of them right here, but you couldn't have four better people to carry on a tradition to worry about kids.

Bob Casey, do you want to comment? Bob.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much; and we'll keep getting you back here one way or the other, somehow.

I want to thank our witnesses, and I want to apologize for having to run out and come back in, as I missed some of the testimony.

One thing I wanted to ask—and maybe I'll start with Marian Wright Edelman, if you don't mind. You get all the tough questions on a regular basis, I know.

I wanted to ask you, and then open it up to all of our witnesses: If you had to pick one or two substantial steps that the Congress could take in, literally, the next 6 months or the 6 months starting in the new Congress, what would that be? I mean, what would your hope and your expectation be for the next 6 months or even the next year?

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. I would like to see you fund fully, the Early Learning Exchange and Head Start and child care. We need to put in place a comprehensive early childhood system in this country. And, so, I would really talk about how we do really significant advances, investments and getting every child ready for school, and going to scale.

Second, I would like to see us, as title I gets reauthorized, make sure that we have a fair funding formula and that the formula is not continuing to be stacked against children in areas of concentrated poverty.

We need to see how we can look at title ID and see if we can if we can have a real dropout prevention policy for the most vulnerable children at risk, and children who are coming back into the community from juvenile detention and from public affair systems.

We need a dropout prevention policy, and I think we have a chance to try to put into place a title ID, something we acknowledge exists, but we comingle the money for them, and so they're not really getting the services that's going to allow them to get back on the path to successful adulthood.

We've got a great opportunity with child care and Head Start and the Early Learning Exchange and with title I to be able to make some real strides for—because of no jobs and jobs for young people and disconnected youth is just disastrous what's going on in poor minority communities.

We don't really have a jobs strategy, and we need to try to do that so that they will have an incentive to stay in school. If you don't see anybody working, you don't see there's going to be the jobs out there, and the drug dealer is the most visible person, then you're not going to sort of have a way of making them be excited about learning.

I would just say jobs, jobs, jobs. The Youth Promise Act, that you had been so importantly engaged with, we need to get investments and prevention, to get more of these young people out of the juvenile justice system and into jobs, and keep them in school.

I put some of that in testimony, but I will also sort of submit for the record—but early childhood, good education, and I mean, fair—fair funding, and title I, and job creation and a way for these young people who have already gotten into difficulty to come back into the community.

Senator CASEY. I don't know whether we go left or right or if anyone else—Dr. Satcher, would you—

Dr. SATCHER. Yes, I want to—and I think I'm responding to the last two questions. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has a component that I think far too few people have read, and it's for prevention agenda.

It calls for the development of a prevention council to be chaired by the Surgeon General; and the Council will be made up of the secretaries of all of these agencies; Commerce, Education, Labor. I think it's the best approach I have seen yet, bringing people together and recognizing that all policy is health policy.

In other words, labor policy is health policy; environmental policy is health policy; education policy is health policy. If we are able to implement this prevention agenda, which is—it doesn't have a lot of funding—I think \$500 million this year; then it goes up to about \$2 billion a year after 2015. Prevention, I agree, is the key. And, there's no better time to invest in prevention than with children.

If we can really implement this prevention agenda, and as we see it working, I think, will provide more funds for it, I think it will deal with many of the issues that Marian and others have talked about here. And certainly will deal with the silos, because it brings together all of these agencies around the issue of how can we do a better job of preventing problems before they begin.

Senator CASEY. Anyone else? I know I'm running out of time.

Ms. BLANK. Can I go?

Senator CASEY. Yes, or Peter.

Mr. EDELMAN. Please.

Ms. BLANK. I would tell you to do no harm. We do have 300,000 children who, unless our money is continued, are going to be on the streets. We're going to see Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms that were just opened up, close down; nowhere for the children to go; and providers are going to lose their jobs.

There are 10,000 children on the waiting list for child care in Pennsylvania.

The clock is ticking, and we will really go backwards; and we can't afford to in early childhood.

As you move into the next session and you look at deficit reduction, listen to Peter about the earned income credit and the child care tax credit, we do have to support families, and, I'm not sure it's silos that are our problem, or that we don't create systems.

If we had good early childhood and good health and good family income, they'd come together. But we don't have the will to invest.

In the next 6 months it's really important that we keep what we have because if you look at what's out there in early childhood and for children and what's happening in States, we can't slip backwards. We won't have a system to build on.

Mr. EDELMAN. Helen said the specific things I was going to say, and, of course, I agree with Marian, for a lot of reasons.

[Laughter.]

I would just add that I know all of the Senators and all of us in this room—I hope Congress is going to act before November 30 to continue the extended unemployment benefits that are a lifeline for such a huge number of people.

Senator CASEY. Thank you. I know I'm out of time, and we will get some other questions submitted for the record. Thank you.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Bob.

Senator Bennet.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BENNET

Senator BENNET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for holding this hearing, and for your leadership over all these years. We all wish you were staying, as well. I certainly do.

Senator DODD. Thank you.

Senator BENNET. One of the saddest moments of my Senate career—a very short career—was learning that the observation that you're entitled to your own facts but not your own opinion, was not original with me, because I've been saying it over, and over, and over again in town hall meetings all over the State of Colorado, especially when you're being paid by the taxpayers for the privilege of serving in one of these jobs.

You said at the outset that we hear these statistics and, you know, they sort of blow by us, and it's so true.

I did a little math among the people that are sitting behind this panel; and if they were children living in poverty in this country, roughly four or five of them could expect to graduate from a 4-year college, but everybody else in the room wouldn't. Roughly six of you would be proficient mathematicians in the 8th grade. The rest of you wouldn't. If you are incarcerated people in our country, I'd have to get all the way over there before I could find one person that had a high school diploma in our prisons.

And, to Peter's point earlier, we just came out of a period of economic growth before we were driven into the worst recession since the Great Depression, where the median family income fell. The first time that's happened in the history of this country. Created no new jobs since 1998 in this country. And, household wealth is the same at the end of the decade as it was at the beginning. That's never happened before.

On top of all of it, we've got \$13 trillion of debt on our balance sheet. And, I've been attacked for saying this, but in my judgment, we have almost nothing to show for it. We haven't invested in our roads, our bridges, our wastewater systems, our schools. We haven't even maintained the assets that our parents and grandparents built for us, much less built the 1st infrastructure we're going to need in the 21st century; transportation, transit, energy.

We are in a deep, deep hole working in a town where the political debate, in my view, is almost utterly unmoored from the facts, almost completely unmoored from the facts.

I share the Chairman's view on the question of silos—having been on the receiving end of this, at least on behalf of the children in the Denver Public Schools who are really on the receiving end of the silo efforts that are in Washington. That's something that I believe we have to work on, desperately, desperately need to work on.

The other question I have for the panel along those lines is, in view of all of that, everything that I just said, and everything that we know, there is going to be priority-setting here. There's going to have to be, because if we don't deal with the deficit and the debt problem the capital markets are going to decide that question for us, and all of these programs are going to go away.

And, my question for those of you that have been around this a lot longer than I have been around this, is, how would you suggest

we approach, as a process question, this priority-setting that needs to happen?

How do we have a more comprehensive discussion about the priorities in a country that is used to being the leader in innovation, but may not be anymore; is used to having led the world in the production of college graduates? Today we're 12th or 15th in the world. That's just, by the way, over 10 years.

How would you recommend we try to create the shared understanding of the facts that the Chairman talked about? Or, have I sufficiently depressed everybody?

[Laughter.]

Mr. CASSERLY. Let me take at least a first crack at it while everybody's thinking. My sense is this—

Senator BENNET. I only ask the question because this is how I start and end every day. And I don't have the answer myself.

Mr. CASSERLY. And, by the way, Mr. Chairman, just for the record, this question exemplifies why Senator Bennet is not only an excellent Senator, he was also an outstanding school leader in the Greater Denver.

Senator BENNET. Thank you.

Mr. CASSERLY. Again, while everybody's thinking—my hunch about this is that frankly, there is no other body in the United States who is capable of sorting out these priorities other than the Congress of the United States, the 50 disparate State legislatures, the governors, all the independent organizations, and the like, really are not equipped to sort through all of the various needs and priorities that we have. It's Congress that needs to do that; and frankly, this panel, and the larger committee, is perfectly equipped and well-positioned to have that debate about what's priority, and what might need to fall off the cliff, and is no longer a priority anymore.

I know this is probably not the answer that you want to hear, but I think the answer rests right here, in this committee.

And now maybe everybody else has a better answer.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Well—

Mr. EDELMAN. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. No, go ahead.

Mr. EDELMAN. Well, the first thing I would say, Senator, is that we need some leadership to say—from this body, from the President—that you need to take an immediate view and a long-term view of this.

I don't care what the economists say—that the recession is over and that all the people on Wall Street, are making those obscene amounts of money again—because there, as we all know, are millions of people out there who don't have jobs.

If we had a fully honest debate about this—I don't have to run for office, so I can say this, obviously—we would talk about the fact that we still need to be putting money out there in various ways to prime the pump of this economy to get it moving again. And, that's before we get to what is a very real problem, with which I fully agree. That's the first thing.

The second thing is, some leadership in the Democratic Party, and among everybody who is thinking, in my view, constructively, about the ratio between taxing people and cutting spending, because what we're hearing from, initially from the co-chairs of the

President's Debt Commission, makes no sense. And, that's connected to what Marian talked about—about these continuing incredible tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country who absolutely don't need it, and who are sitting wherever they sit, having a very good time watching everybody talking about it to their benefit, who, in fact, isn't going to get anything out of it. I don't get that.

We need those revenues to run our country. They're part of our community, too. They should think of themselves as part of the United States of America's society for every one of the people who lives here. And, they should contribute to it.

That's a ratio of what we need to do.

Then, we need to have a conversation about national priorities that talks about where we're spending money, including on the defense side, including on a lot of other things that we do—insisting that we're going to protect our country, of course, so that everything's on the table to be judged on the merits.

And then we can get into—we're still going to have some pain. We're still going to do some things that we don't want to, but I don't think the premises are correct right now.

Dr. SATCHER. I'll be brief. I think the priority ought to be to invest in children. I think we probably all agree on that. And I think that investment should be in health promotion and disease prevention; and I think it should be looked at comprehensively, all of the things that impact the promotion of health of children and of prevention of disease in children.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. I just want to be very simple. I mean, I just think, what do we stand for? I think you start with what are your values, and what is the dream of America.

I just don't understand any country that could say, "We're the wealthiest in the world" and let its children be the poorest; and you know, not get the basic health care—I think that it should—the country that does not stand for its children doesn't stand for anything; and we don't, and we're going to be punished for it in the lack of a future, in the lack of competitive things.

If America can't stand for its children like every other rich and industrialized Nation, who has more sense than we do, we're going to fall; and we're going to deserve to fall, and to fail. And so that the statistics that all of us have shared today are our economic downfall, but they're also our moral downfall.

Second, Dr. King's last sermon title, that he called his mother the day he got assassinated, was about why America may go to hell. And, he talked about America will go to hell if we don't use our vast resources to help the poor. And, he died trying to get a poor people's campaign.

What kind of country takes from the poor and the weak children and gives it to the rich and the powerful corporations? I mean, who in the world are we?

I think you start from a values premise of how we create a just and fair playing field for every citizen, how we leave the country better and more just than we found it as adults and grandparents.

So the whole point is, is what are we going to stand for in the world? Are we going to be a beacon of what democracy can be? I would hope that we can begin to get back to our senses and the

basic reasons why the American dream is called the American dream; and it certainly isn't, go backwards and eat up the seed core in the future, and it certainly isn't letting your most vulnerable suffer.

We say we come out of a Judeo-Christian tradition; and I think we ought to begin trying to apply.

Senator BENNET. I'm way over, Mr. Chairman, but I think you said it even more simply at the beginning, which was, part of our job was to make sure we're creating more opportunity, not less, for our kids and our grandkids.

And, if I had to say there was just one animating thing in the town halls that I've done in the last 22 months, whether it's Republicans or Democrats or Tea Party Folks or whoever it is, that is a principle that everybody agrees with; and my own view is, there's not enough of that, that leading the way in this town these days.

So, I'd like to thank the panel.

Senator DODD. Very good. Michael, thanks very much.

Bernie, thank you very much.

Senator SANDERS. Mr. Chairman, thank you for assembling what I honestly believe is one of the best panels, the most knowledgeable panels, most moral panels that I've heard since I've been in the Senate. It's a great group of people, and I'm glad you brought them together.

Just a few points; then I've got a couple of questions.

Peter, I absolutely agree with you. In 3 hours, in terms of the so-called Deficit Reduction Commission, we're going to be holding a meeting here with some of the more progressive Senators, House Members, etc., to say that—yes, we've got to deal with the deficit, but not on the backs of poor people and the middle class. We've got a huge expansion of military spending, great gap between the very rich and everybody else.

There are ways to deal with the deficit without cutting back on the needs of ordinary people.

Marian, I think you touched on—you made a point that has come up time and time again, about what other countries are doing. Other countries apparently understand something that we don't—that it makes a lot more sense to invest in your children than invest in jails. It cost more money to keep somebody in jail than to send them to Harvard University.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Precisely.

Senator SANDERS. Say a word like Marian, or Peter or anybody else, to talk about in terms of early childhood education; how we compare to other countries around the world, and whether or not—not only from a moral sense of preparing our kids for school, but just from an economic sense, whether it doesn't make more sense to keep kids healthy, Dr. Satcher, keep kids in school, or whether you let them drop out of school and we pay for their jail cells.

Compare what the United States is doing to other rational industrialized countries, Dr. Satcher. Did you want to—

Dr. SATCHER. Well, when I started out, I talked about my experience with the World Health Organization, and our Commission on Social Determinates of Health.

And, one of the most impressive things to me was to visit countries like Chile; that it decided that it was better to invest in the

children, especially of the poor, in terms of day care and education and good nutrition, physical activity. And they reasoned that later on it would save on the cost of medical care, but also save on the cost of jail and prison.

Sweden, I think has been doing that much longer. It was great to see a country like Chile that had made this decision and now they were carrying it out.

We went to day care centers. We went to elementary schools, to junior high schools, where they had model nutrition and they had model physical activity programs. They were investing in these children. It was their strategy.

Senator SANDERS. From an economic point of view—

Mr. EDELMAN. That's right.

Senator SANDERS. Not just from a moral point of view.

Mr. EDELMAN. That's exactly right.

Senator SANDERS. Well, let me throw out another question. Somehow, you know, the Government of the United States hasn't quite caught on that the world has changed since the 1950s; that mommy is not home with the two kids while daddy is out working. It's amazing how little we have reached that understanding.

God didn't create schools beginning at the age of 5.

Marian, or anybody else, if you could snap your fingers, what kind of early childhood—would you divide, in fact, early childhood education from education in general; or would you say, "Well, you know, for the working parents, if you want to send your kid to a good quality, early childhood or preschool, that's available to you, how would you proceed?"

Is that idea that school begins at age 5 a little bit outdated at this point?

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Well, I think that we should have a high quality comprehensive, early childhood system that fits within the needs of our children. And, I know how much concern you have, and what a strong proponent you've made.

I think the children who are zero to three have different needs, and we really should talk about the age of a child and what's going to be developed that's mentally appropriate, and 4- and 5-year-olds may need something different.

Even though the school is the one universal system that we have, I'm not just for lowering the school age down, particularly when we've got—from my point of view, schools need to do—they're not doing such a good job with the children they have. So, I wouldn't want to get them younger.

Not to say that we wouldn't have schools as a integral part of a delivery system in rural areas and other areas where that may be the best way to do; but I just think we need to look at the developmental needs of children and the needs of parents; and then figure out what kind of system—

Ms. GARNER. It's parental support.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. It's parental support, and then again—and talk about all the range of family supports from zero up to—through schools and through graduation from schools and into college that we need.

I'm for a little bit more diverse delivery system, even though the school ought to be the key, and the school ought to be made to do their jobs.

Senator SANDERS. Dr. Casserly, did you want to jump in?

Mr. CASSERLY. Yes. I generally agree with Marian's perspective on this. I think a diverse provider model for early childhood education makes a lot of sense. Everybody has a substantial role to play in this issue; schools do, the Head Start agencies do, and other child care providers do.

Whoever does the providing, though, the basic point is that the research is really quite clear on this issue, that by the time the children are 2 and 3 years old, what eventually becomes the academic achievement gap is already there.

And, if we do not do something about that in the earliest possible years of development, then the gaps that we see all the way through schools, that schools have been so unable to close, will simply be continued and reflected in schools, and maybe even perpetuated by—

Senator SANDERS. What you're saying, essentially, is that permanent damage is now being caused to many very, very young children, and we're asking schools to do something which is extraordinarily difficult because the damage has already been caused.

Mr. CASSERLY. By not attending to early childhood education—

Senator SANDERS. Right.

Mr. CASSERLY [continuing]. In this country and early childhood development, I think we do do damage.

Ms. BLANK. We are seeing a growing number of States do pre-K programs, and in some States it's actually part of the school finance formula, which is the best way to finance it, because we haven't found another way.

And, in many States, it's a diverse delivery system. It's not just the schools.

Senator SANDERS. Right.

Ms. BLANK. Like in New York State, about 60 percent of the pre-K is delivered in schools in early childhood settings, in child care or Head Start Programs. And, I think we all agree that would be better for young children.

The challenge—and it will probably be mostly the threes and fours that will eventually be in the schools—is that you've got to pay attention to the needs of working parents. And everybody wants to make it simple and to make it cheap, but the truth is, when we look at pre-K, most of it is 2½ hours a day.

In Iowa it could be 3 days. It's only a maximum of 12 hours.

So, you actually need the full day child care subsidy to make it fit for working parents, because I don't think schools—and that would be ideal if somebody wanted to pay through the school system to have the 10 hours, 52 weeks a year.

Senator SANDERS. Well, let me just pick up there.

Ms. BLANK. We have to be careful when we talk about this so children don't fall through the cracks.

Senator SANDERS. Let me tell you a happy story. This is from a terrible earmark that I got that went to schools in Vermont—low-income schools.

We ran a summer program 40 hours a week so parents could feel comfortable. Their kids were out in recreational programs, in this case, through the schools, as well as learning programs. Walked into the school. These kids were excited. They couldn't wait to get to school in the middle of the summer. And, what the teachers then tell you and what the principal says, these kids are ready to go when school starts. They haven't lost what they learned in May and June. A modest investment.

But, it was full-time; parents felt great about it; kids felt happy to be in school.

David.

Dr. SATCHER. I just want to support the concept of supporting parenting. When we did the Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence Prevention, I'll always remember it was the only report that I did that was requested by both the President and the Congress, because after the Columbine shooting we looked at several strategies for youth violence prevention, and concluded that those programs that included supporting parents, starting with pregnancy—and then we have a lot of teenage parents—and then in these programs there was a visiting nurse who went and visited these parents while they were pregnant and talked about parent-child bonding.

And then that went on after the child was born for at least a year or more.

We're doing some of those things now in Atlanta.

The whole idea is that, if you can strengthen parenting, in terms of nutrition, in terms of communicating with the child, early child development, it pays off.

We saw a 50 percent reduction in those populations where those programs were in place.

There have been several studies like that. I don't know why we ignore them. But it shows that if we are willing to support good parenting, through educating parents, through supporting them—even teenagers who happen to get pregnant—if we support them in developing as parents in bonding with the child, it makes a big difference in the future of those children.

Ms. WRIGHT EDELMAN. Can I just say one thing; that there's some obvious building blocks that we could get done right now, and I hope that we don't have universal kindergarten in our States. I think it's about 12 States, if my memory is right, but I have to check.

But the first thing, we were all talking about universal pre-K. Well, universal pre-K without universal K makes no sense. And so, at least you ought to bring it down 1 year, and bring it down 2 years and put in the high-quality year-round options.

But my basic point is, we've talked about silos from the inside. We've also got to stop the silos on the outside.

The preschool people often don't talk to the K-people, don't talk to the Head Start people, and Early Head Start doesn't talk to regular Head Start, and they don't—it's about children. It's not about providers, it's not about adult jobs; it's about what's going to make sense and is going to be for the best welfare of the children and their families.

All of us need to get our act together and break down these silos. There are a couple of cracks in the barrel, and we don't have enough funding and all that, but children have to be at the core of the policy-development process.

So what makes sense? What's going to be good for them, not what is our organizational interest, or what is our whatever interest, bravado interest. And in most systems, sadly, children are beside the point. And the debates that go on don't have very much to do with children.

If we just keep children at the core, and families, and what they need; and then how do we forge the right policy and adjust them from time to time as changes needs change, then I think we'll be on the right road.

Ms. BLANK. We have one program, one national building block that focuses on what the doctor spoke about, the needs of very young children and their families, that's starting to fade into the background; and that's Early Head Start.

Early Head Start was started in 1993 under President Clinton by this committee, and it's a comprehensive approach to reaching mothers, even pregnant mothers in young children, and it got a big boost in the Economic Stimulus bill. But it seems to be just fading into the background. And we actually have the building blocks. Hopefully, we'll pull it out and have more than 4 percent of the babies and toddlers who could use the participation.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms. GARNER. It really is about supporting the mother, though, because the children growing up in poverty, by the time they're 3 or 4 they're hearing 33 million fewer words than kids in middle class. There's one book for every 300 kids versus 13 books for every child in middle class. Those are just the smallest numbers, but it's the mother knowing to talk to her child.

And, the mother has to not be depressed; has to have motivation. She has to be told that the child actually—that it matters to talk to this little blob who's not talking back. And, that's just as important. You have to take care of mothers.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you, very much.

Senator DODD. Only a mother of a 1-year-old would call them a "blob".

[Laughter.]

If any one of us had said that, however, you'd be in deep trouble.

Ms. GARNER. Yes, I can say it. I've been there.

Senator DODD. I just have a couple of things. Michael Bennet said something—and again, both Bernie and Michael have been tremendously helpful in this.

And, again, I've done town hall meetings over the years. This is the one issue, you know, we're at a time when everyone's divided over environmental questions—what do you do, not do? There's not a single audience I've ever appeared before that when you say the following—there's not a single person in the room—the one thing we care about. We care about ourselves.

If you really probe an audience, what they really care about more than themselves, is what happens to their kids and their grandchildren. And, that's really what this is all about. I mean, that's as natural as breathing, to me.

In a highly-divided country, one where there's a lot of acrimony over various groups and organizations and what they stand for, if you were to ask me what's the one common issue, the one issue that we use in every faction in this country together, it's this one. It's this one.

Now, there are debates about what you want to do, and so on, but, nonetheless, people understand the value and the importance, both from a national perspective as well as an individual.

Jennifer, we talk about how to get this done. You're in the entertainment business. And first, I'm curious about why you chose this issue, but I wonder if you might share with us, today, the power—I saw yesterday where the average child is spending 5 hours a day in front of a TV screen. At least that's what the numbers were.

Ms. GARNER. It's child care.

Senator DODD. Yes. The power of the entertainment industry, to be able to educate, to inform—I still think it's as compelling as anything, and historically, that's been true. You go back and read the wonderful biographies.

A good friend of mind wrote of Louis B. Mayer and others about how they were able, in the early days of film, to provide a common denominator and define for a Nation a certain value system, in many ways, because we all—or our grandparents and parents—went to the movies; and then as such they developed almost a sense of unity in the way that other events, historically, had not provided for the country.

It's a rather interesting story, in my view; what the entertainment industry has been able to share with us; product placement, all of the ideas we know that go on as a way of instructing, informing people, educating people, promoting products and so on.

I wonder if you've given any thought on how they—the business from which you come. You've made the choice, which is fabulous. You picked out this cluster of issues to focus your attention on.

I wonder if you have any thoughts at all about how we can convince—or whether or not there is an appetite within the industry itself. And I realize it's a big, diverse industry, but, with video games and all of the things that are going on out there, if something more could be done within that industry, which I suspect has an appetite to want to be helpful, that could allow us to maybe do a better job on some of the things we have a hard time doing here.

And again, Dr. Casserly's point about why do we do this thing in slices? I'll tell you why; because it's the only way to get it done. I've been the sponsor of Marian's bills—our comprehensive bills. We could never get one other co-sponsor. And, yet, if I pick out a slice of it and I make it narrow enough, I can go around and I can shop it and I spent thousands of hours, I spent shopping ideas to get a co-sponsor on the other side to work on it. And, every time I get with—when someone tries to expand the product, it runs into a deep hole. It never comes out.

The rationale for doing this is not because we don't agree with you—I do agree with you. But, if I waited for that to happen, we'd be sitting around here still talking about the things that we wish would occur.

I'm jumping around a little bit, but Jennifer, do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. GARNER. Well, your first question, why I became interested?

Senator DODD. Right.

Ms. GARNER. In this issue.

Senator DODD. Right.

Ms. GARNER. Just briefly. I know everyone's been here a while. My mother grew up the daughter of a dirt farmer in Oklahoma, one of 11 kids in extreme poverty during the depression—extreme poverty. She was the only one to leave and to go to college and travel the world, actually. And the way that she did that was—there was a reason, she believes, that she had those opportunities because her family was committed to reciting poetry as they did the chores, singing together, reading together. They would muster up books and read them, read them, read them, re-read them, re-read them.

And, she had kindergarten-readiness when she started school just from those basic building blocks, just kids trying to get through the day together without a nickel to rub together. And, because of that she always excelled in school. She knew how to learn, she knew—and because she got that positive reinforcement from school, she went on and graduated from college.

I grew up, then, in West Virginia where I was, of course, surrounded by—I grew up in a middle class family. I was very fortunate. My parents knew that education was the foundation for everything, but I was surrounded by kids who I could see, with my own eyes, had much less than I did, and I saw that they did not do as well in school.

It was very easy for me, when I started to have a little bit of a voice in the world, I felt like other than the great mentorship I got from Marian early on, the kids in my community were not being serviced.

So, that is what led me to Save the Children, who work, specifically, more with kids in rural America.

And, the entertainment industry is an incredibly philanthropic industry, don't you find? And, very eager to get involved and dig into Washington, certainly, and muck around here.

Entertainment is not the answer to educate kids, by any stretch. I may do it, but I don't have a TV on in my house, although I will be on Sesame Street in a couple of weeks, and that's kind of the biggest moment of my career to date.

This problem of kids sitting in front of a television while their parents are doing everything, it's certainly pervasive, and there are good, educational stuff on television. It's not that I don't believe in Sesame Street or Dinosaur Train, but there has to be money to fund those. There has to be money to fund PBS or else the things that kind of put sarcasm and ugliness and kids putting each other down, which as far as I can tell, is what's offered to young children, is going to be more the norm.

Senator DODD. Yes. Well, I hear you and I see that as well, and because I don't think you're going to necessarily change—unfortunately, watch it, but a lot of these so-called child care settings, which are not the ones that we've talked about, but where, basically pretty much putting a bunch of kids in front of a TV screen for 3 or 4 hours, and that constitutes child care.

And, to the extent the industry is so much of what kids learn, what they model and so forth, there's no reason why a good story can't be told in a way—

Ms. GARNER. Well, there's no Mr. Rogers anymore. It's "iCarley" and "Hannah Montana."

Senator DODD. Yes. And, I'm just as curious as to why, because I suspect there are people who are involved in that who would also want to be associated and think of themselves—

Ms. GARNER. Of course. Absolutely. But, they're in a business and those shows were funded. They were funded by the public broadcasting network, and— isn't that PBS' Public something, and if they're not funded, they'll go to what makes money and what sells their corn flakes, and that's this stuff that you see on television now.

Senator DODD. Gary Goldberg, whom I've known for a long time is involved in some of the most successful commercial television programming. He's also one of the great advocates of child care.

One of the oldest child care settings in the country is in Santa Monica, which was developed during World War II, and sustained itself, even though others closed their doors when lifestyles changed at the end of World War II, and yet it developed some very good, very successful commercial programming that also had the ability of also being a source of positive messaging, and can make a difference.

I'm not expecting people to become all PBS stations, necessarily. I realize that's not going to happen, but again, I'm not going to dwell on this particular point, but since we had you in front of us here, and you come out of the industry, I thought I'd at least explore the idea with you, as to whether or not there might be a better way, since it preoccupies so much of a child's time, it seems to me, that we're not going to stop that, necessarily.

So, the question is, can we channel it in some way—

Ms. GARNER. Yes.

Senator DODD [continuing]. To have a more positive impact on this whole question we're raising. And, with adults, as well. I mean, a lot of the times, what programming between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., so-called "prime time"—to what extent—are there any efforts, during that programming, to be able to also use it as an educational tool on what's occurring in our country.

Ms. GARNER. No, sir, there are not. I've been on these programs. We don't try to educate you; we try to sell you cars.

Senator DODD. Yes.

Ms. GARNER. Yes, there is definitely a missed opportunity in educating and entertaining kids at the same time.

Senator DODD. Yes.

Ms. GARNER. It's out there. Those shows do exist. They are successful. But it is not the norm.

Senator DODD. No. Well, with that note of good—

[Laughter.]

Well, listen, I too want to echo what Bernie Sanders said, and that is—and for me, of course, over the last 30 years, it's not been an uncommon experience to have the wonderful pleasure of sitting on this side of the dais, to hear the eloquence and compassion and commitment of so many of you at the table this morning.

It's a nice note on which to end, I think.
[Applause.]
[Additional material follows.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DEBRA L. NESS, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES

SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE THROUGH FAMILY-FRIENDLY PUBLIC POLICIES

The National Partnership for Women & Families applauds Chairman Dodd for his career-long dedication to improving the lives of women and children. We thank him for convening these hearings to point the way for future action on these vital issues.

Children are our Nation's future. Safeguarding their health and enhancing their ability to learn must be a top priority. America's children will only thrive if the people who care for them the most—their parents and guardians—can take the time away from work to look after them when they are sick. Family-friendly workplace policies that provide paid sick days and paid family leave are crucial to the health and well-being of America's children.

Let's face it—children get sick. Children face both short-term, common illnesses and long-term serious health conditions; in both cases, they need their parents with them to get better faster. Younger children in particular need parental care and supervision when they fall ill, and sick children of all ages need parents to administer medicine and take them to medical appointments. Study after study shows that children recover faster when cared for by their parents. The mere presence of a parent at a child's bedside shortens the child's hospital stay by 31 percent,¹ reducing health care costs and improving health outcomes.²

Children—and our communities—suffer when parents lack paid leave. Despite the clear benefits for children and families, many parents can't be there for their sick children because their employers don't offer paid sick days or paid family leave. At least 53 percent of working mothers and 48 percent of working fathers don't have access to paid sick days to care for a sick child or recover from their own illnesses³ and only 10 percent of private-sector workers have access to paid family leave through their employers.⁴

When routine illnesses like the flu strike, many children go it alone at home without anyone to care for them, or they go to school sick—and risk getting sicker—because their parents can't take time off from their jobs. Parents without paid sick days are more than twice as likely to send a sick child to school or daycare.⁵ When children go to school or child care sick, it affects their ability to learn, and the health of other children, teachers, and child care providers is also put at risk.⁶ The result is similar to when sick adults go to work: decreased productivity, increased contagion and higher rates of infection for all.

Paid leave is good for newborns and early childhood development as well. Paid parental leave is associated with lower child mortality rates and healthy child development.⁷ Children whose mothers take longer leaves before returning to work full-time after giving birth are more likely to be taken to the pediatrician for regular checkups and more likely to be breast-fed, which contributes to life-long child health.⁸

The health and well-being of children improves when mothers and fathers have access to paid sick days and paid family leave. When parents can't take time away from work, children cannot get the timely medical care they need. Parents without paid sick days are five times more likely to take a child or other family member to an emergency room.⁹ In contrast, working parents with paid sick time or paid vacation days are five times more likely to stay home to care for their sick children than those without paid time off.¹⁰ Children's long-term health is better because they are more likely to be taken to well-child visits and to get their immunizations, which may prevent serious illnesses, when their parents have paid sick days.¹¹

Working families across the country need and want these policies. Seventy-six percent of Americans believe that businesses should be required to provide paid family and medical leave, including 61 percent of Republicans and 90 percent of Democrats.¹² States and cities across the country have already taken the lead in moving legislation forward and the time has come for Federal action as well. Proposals like the Healthy Families Act and paid family leave insurance programs would make a tremendous difference to the health and well-being of our Nation's children. They must be a priority for this committee and the Congress in the future.

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⁴U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 32: Leave benefits: Access, civilian workers," *National Compensation Survey*. March 2010. <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ews/benefits/2010/ebbl0046.pdf>.

⁵National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago for the Public Welfare Foundation, *Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences*. May 2010. <http://www.publicwelfare.org/resources/DocFiles/psd2010final.pdf>.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 952. 2000.

⁸Lawrence M. Berger, Jennifer Hill, and Jane Waldfogel, "Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the U.S.," *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 115, No. 501, 44. 2005.

⁹See note 5.

¹⁰S.J. Heymann, S. Toomey, and F. Furstenberg, "Working Parents: What Factors are Involved in Their Ability to Take Time Off From Work When Their Children are Sick?," *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 153. August 1999. 870-74. As cited in Lovell 2006.

¹¹See note 2.

¹²Heather Boushey, "It's Time for Policies to Match Family Needs." 2010. In Maria Shriver, Heather Boushey, Ann O'Leary, and John Podesta, *The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything*. 2009. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/pdf/work_survey.pdf.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TRACY L. WAREING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HUMAN SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Chairman Dodd, Ranking Member Alexander, and honorable members of the Children and Families Subcommittee, the National Association of State Child Care Administrators, an affiliate organization of the American Public Human Services Association, respectfully submits this statement for the record on "the state of the American child."

APHSA is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization representing State and local human service professionals for more than 80 years. NASCCA serves State child care administrators and supports its members in developing, promoting and implementing child care and early learning policies that improve the well-being of children and the quality of child care. NASCCA brings State child care administrators' perspective on issues facing the Nation's low-income children and families to the forefront of Congress and the Obama administration.

As you know, child care is an essential resource for America's families to obtain and secure employment while simultaneously ensuring that today's children are prepared to be tomorrow's leaders. The Child Care and Development Fund plays a critical role in providing low-income families with subsidized child care so they can work or attain training/education and at the same time, support the investment of quality care and early education for children. The CCDF is a flexible block grant; therefore the program is operated with great variation among States. The CCDF lead agencies provide training, grants and loans to providers, improved monitoring, compensation projects and other innovative programs. In addition, child care administrators use CCDF to make systemic investments, such as developing quality rating and improvement systems and professional development systems to improve the overall child care infrastructure. States may access up to 30 percent of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families transfer funds for child care expenditures. Maintaining the relationship between TANF and child care is essential for low-income families to continue working while their children receive quality care and education.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided States with additional funds to maintain their child care programs within tough budget constraints. States have been using these dollars in a variety of ways; however, stimulus funds were mainly used to lower child care copayments and make them affordable for families who have been greatly affected by the economic downturn. Some States, territories and tribes have used ARRA funds to increase provider rates, which has been an important incentive to help child care providers maintain their businesses and continue operating their services. Without stimulus dollars, many children eligible for child care subsidies would have been restricted from receiving this support, parents

would have been challenged to obtain work without access to affordable care for their children, and child care waiting lists would have been greater. ARRA dollars are a one-time-investment and although they will soon expire, child care administrators have wisely and efficiently used these funds to restore and revamp the child care infrastructure, which are projected to produce better outcomes in years to come. These advancements include professional development opportunities for child care providers, technology enhancements that improve data collection and reports and promotion of quality child care. Stimulus funds have been critical in providing families with economic support and States with fiscal relief to maintain their programs during this time of recession. We thank Congress for this temporary relief; however, more work needs to be done to continue these developments.

Federal child care funding levels have not aligned with program needs and with the increase in inflation since 2002. In addition, while States focus on improving the quality of child care programs, low-income families struggle with affording the costs associated with enrolling their children in high-quality child care settings. High-quality care is in great demand and is beneficial for securing the Nation's workforce and developing human capital. As a result, it will alleviate the economic burden in our country and produce a return on States' investment. To ensure that more children gain access to this type of early education, it is essential for Congress to reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

We recommend the following:

- Increase CCDBG funding levels and maintain its flexibility;
- Maintain partnership with the TANF program;
- Relax Federal requirements for matching funds;
- Support States' efforts to address the workforce development needs of child care workers that promote high-quality care and early education.

We look forward to working with Congress on these recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments and your interest in examining the state of the American child. If you have any questions, please contact Rashida Brown at (202) 682-0100 x225 or rashida.brown@aphsa.org.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR HATCH BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Question 1. A portion of your testimony was devoted to the subject of gun violence among our Nation's youth. You made the following statement in both your written and verbal testimony:

The terrible Taliban terrorist threat to American child and citizen safety is rivaled by the terrible NRA threat which terrorizes our political leaders from protecting our children from the over 280 million guns in circulation which have taken over 110,000 child lives since 1979, when gun data collection by age began.

Now, I won't fault anyone simply for engaging in hyperbole to make a larger point. However, I believe it is more than simple exaggeration to compare the Taliban to the National Rifle Association. It is, quite simply, needlessly inflammatory and, in my opinion, irresponsible. The NRA has nearly 4 million members representing all walks of American life. In most polls, it has a higher approval rating than either political party. More importantly, virtually every poll has shown that the vast majority of Americans support the NRA's chief policy goal, which is the preservation of the rights of gun ownership for law-abiding citizens.

Obviously, you are free to disagree with the NRA's position on any number of issues. I am, of course, aware that it is all the rage these days to compare one's political opponents to the worst elements of human society, whether it is Hitler or the Taliban. However, I believe such tactics are detrimental to our discourse and, in the end, unpersuasive.

My question to you is: Do you honestly believe that one can make a meaningful comparison between the NRA and the Taliban? Do you truly believe the NRA is responsible for gun violence in America? If so, does that responsibility extend to the NRA's millions of members and the majority of American citizens who support the rights of gun owners? And, do you include the Supreme Court—which has validated the NRA's position on the meaning of the Second Amendment—in that criticism? Many members of Congress also share this view. Are we, in your view, also culpable for the deaths of children?

Answer 1. Over 280 million guns are in civilian hands in the United States; that is approximately 9 guns for every 10 men, women and children.¹ Every year, an es-

¹L. Hepburn, M. Miller, D. Azrael, and D. Hemenway. 2007. The U. S. Gun Stock: Results from the 2004 National Firearms Survey. *Injury Prevention* 13: 15-19. Available at <http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/13/1/15.full>. Accessed July 2010.

estimated 4.5 million new firearms, including 2 million handguns, are sold.² With this many guns in civilian hands, the terrible truth is that there is no place to hide from gun violence. Children and teens are not safe from gun violence at school, at home, or anywhere else in America.

Children in America face the highest death toll from guns of any other industrialized nation. Internationally, no other country comes close. Children and teens killed by gunfire in 2007 nearly equaled the total number of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq since the war started and were more than four times the number of American combat fatalities in Afghanistan. The child gun death toll since 1979 is double the death toll of U.S. soldiers killed in the Vietnam War.

Although polls show that the majority of Americans favor common-sense gun control laws that would reduce the epidemic of gun deaths, Federal and State legislative reforms have been difficult to achieve. I firmly believe that the National Rifle Association (NRA), with its growing power and political influence, has been a major impediment to the passage of common-sense gun legislation that could help keep our children safe from guns.

As you know, Congress has not embraced pursuit of significant gun control legislation in nearly two decades, despite an annual rate of firearm deaths that exceeds all other industrialized nations. The 1993 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act required gun dealers, but not private sellers (known as the “gun show loop hole”), to run background checks on gun buyers. One year later, Congress passed legislation banning private ownership of assault weapons. Since then, there has been only bad news. Rather than acting to stem gun violence, Congress let the assault weapons ban expire and passed legislation to protect gun manufacturers and dealers from lawsuits if their guns are used to commit a crime.

We need to protect our children by enacting legislation to limit the number of guns in our communities, control who can obtain firearms (keep guns out of the hands of criminals and people who kill children), and ensure that guns in the home are stored safely and securely. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that nearly 2 million children live in homes with loaded and unlocked guns.

The NRA has made clear its opposition to nearly all forms of gun control including restrictions on assault weapon ownership (which have nothing to do with hunting), handgun registration requirements, and buyer background checks, despite a recent survey suggesting its members may have more moderate views about certain gun control measures.³ The NRA continues to go to great lengths to protect gun rights and actions that often result in policy and real life outcomes that are not in the best interest of our Nation’s children and threaten their safety.

For example:

- A popular 2009 bill that placed certain restrictions on credit card lenders came with a totally unrelated provision negotiated by the NRA which allows people to carry loaded guns in national parks.
- In the 2010 health care debate, the NRA successfully lobbied Congress to include a little noticed provision that will prohibit health insurance companies from charging higher premiums for people who keep a gun in their home.
- In June 2010, a measure that would have given the District of Columbia a voting seat in Congress never made it to a vote in part because the NRA inserted a provision to substantially weaken the District’s gun laws.

The NRA has also worked to build influence by working out a deal in 2010 to exempt only itself from the DISCLOSE Act, a campaign finance bill that would require groups that spend more than \$10,000 a year on campaign activities to disclose their donors.

It seems nonsensical that U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission regulates toy guns and teddy bears but not real guns that snuffed out the lives of 3,042 children and teens in 2007.

The U.S. Supreme Court has recently concluded that the Second Amendment’s guarantee of an individual right to have a gun in the home for self-defense applies to Federal, State and local gun control laws. However, it is significant and important to note that the Court also was careful to point out that its recent rulings do not prohibit all government regulation of guns. The Court specified that the government has a vital interest in placing limits on certain types of guns, the sale of guns and where they can be kept and carried. Urgent steps must be taken to keep our children and communities safe from guns.

² Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. 2000. *Commerce in Firearms in the United States*. Washington, DC: Department of the Treasury.

³ “Gun Owners: NRA Gun-Owners and Non-NRA Gun Owners,” Poll commissioned by the Mayors Against Illegal Guns, December 2009. Available at http://www.mayorsagainstillegalguns.org/html/federal/nra_member_poll.shtml.

Question 2. I'd also like to take a closer look at some of the numbers cited in your testimony. In your statement, you cited that there were roughly 3,000 gun-related deaths among American children in 2007. I presume you got these numbers from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). What you didn't cite was the fact that most of the deaths represented in that number were not among children, nor even adolescents. The vast majority of the gun-related deaths cited in your testimony occur among juveniles and young adults, those between the ages of 15 and 20. Only a very small percentage of those deaths were among people young enough to fit the normal understanding of childhood ages.

More importantly, you also neglected to mention the fact that, according to the NCHS, gun-related deaths in the U.S.—including those among young people—have been declining steadily over the last three decades. This decline in gun violence has occurred even as public support for the rights of gun owners has increased and as supporters of Second Amendment rights have continued to prevail politically.

Do you acknowledge that, according to the available evidence, gun violence in America is actually on the decline instead of getting worse? If so, to what would you attribute the decrease in violence, given that, according to your testimony, political leaders have been “terrorized” from protecting our children?

Answer 2. As we acknowledge in the Children's Defense Fund's recent report, *Protect Children Not Guns 2010*, gun violence among children and teens has been declining since the mid-1990s. After reaching an all-time high of 5,793 gun deaths in 1994, the annual number of firearm deaths of children and teens declined by 47 percent between 1994 and 2007, although the number increased in 2005 and 2006 and remained above 3,000 in 2007. Although the total annual number of firearm deaths of White children has historically surpassed Black children (until 2007), gun deaths among White children and teens have *decreased* by 54 percent since 1979 while gun deaths of Black children and teens have *increased* by 61 percent over the same period.

While recognizing the overall decrease in gun deaths, I firmly believe that the number of children and teens killed by guns every year in this country—3,042 in 2007—is profoundly unacceptable. We also must not forget the 17,253—almost six times as many—children and teens who suffered non-fatal gun injuries and their emotional aftermath that same year.

We are clear in our *Protect Children Not Guns 2010* report that 95 percent of firearm deaths of young people occurred among children and teens 10 to 19 years old and we believe that each of their lives is of equal value. More young people in that age range die from gunshot wounds in America than from any cause other than motor vehicle accidents. Shamefully, in 2007 there also were 154 children younger than 10 killed by firearms. The 85 preschoolers in this group exceeded the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty that year.

Every adult and leader has a responsibility to protect children and to take necessary steps to stop this senseless and unnecessary loss of young lives and the other physical and emotional harm to children and teens resulting from guns. Many children in poor neighborhoods are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder on a daily basis, which cripples their lives, but the random mass killing—whether at Columbine or Virginia Tech—could be alleviated if powerful automatic weapons were not available to non-law enforcement officials. Guns make anger lethal and victimize innocent people including children.

[Whereupon, at 12:37 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]