



**Reinvesting in Children, Youth, and Families
to Advance U.S. Security and Prosperity FY27**

Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

March 6, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies

Dear Representative Aderholt, Representative DeLauro, Senator Capito, and Senator Baldwin,

The Child Partnership is a growing coalition committed to advancing effective, accountable investments that protect children while strengthening American security, public health preparedness, workforce resilience, and supply chain integrity—priorities reaffirmed in the FY26 Labor–HHS conference agreement.

On behalf of the Partnership, we respectfully request strong funding in the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to address four interconnected risks to children and to U.S. interests: violence and exploitation, child sexual abuse (including online exploitation), preventable infectious disease, and forced and child labor in global supply chains.

We urge the Subcommittee to provide:

- **\$118,000,000** for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), Department of Labor
- **\$10,000,000** for CDC’s Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS)
- **At least \$10,000,000** for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention research within CDC’s Division of Violence Prevention
- **\$692,843,000** for CDC’s Global Health Center

These targeted investments advance the Committee’s priorities in prevention, global health security, economic competitiveness, and workforce protection while delivering measurable returns for U.S. taxpayers.

Department of Labor

Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)

FY27 Request: \$118,000,000

FY26 Enacted: \$116,000,000

Justification: In the FY26 Labor–HHS Congress enacted \$116 million for ILAB, reaffirming bipartisan support for protecting workers, strengthening supply chains, and combating exploitative labor practices. For FY27, we respectfully request \$118 million to sustain and modestly strengthen this work.

An estimated 160 million children—nearly 1 in 10 globally—are engaged in child labor, many in hazardous or forced conditions. ¹ Economic shocks, conflict, and climate-related displacement have reversed progress in fragile regions. ILAB is the only U.S. government agency solely dedicated to eliminating exploitative child labor and forced labor worldwide. Since 1995, ILAB-supported programs have removed or prevented nearly 2 million children from hazardous labor and supported more than 185,000 households through education and livelihood assistance. ²

ILAB also strengthens labor law enforcement, supports compliance under U.S. trade preference programs, and maintains the List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor—an essential tool for protecting American consumers and businesses from unfair competition tied to exploitation. Sustained funding protects vulnerable children while advancing U.S. economic and trade interests.

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward* (Geneva: ILO and UNICEF, 2021), finding 160 million children in child labor worldwide, including 79 million in hazardous work.

² International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward* (Geneva: ILO and UNICEF, 2021).

Department of Health and Human Services

CDC – Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS)

FY27 Request: \$10,000,000

Past Enactments: \$3,000,000

Justification: Violence against children is a global public health crisis affecting approximately one billion children each year.³ Exposure to violence is strongly associated with increased risk of chronic disease, mental illness, substance use, and long-term economic instability.⁴

The Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS) are nationally representative, population-based surveys that generate actionable, disaggregated data to inform prevention systems. Since 2007, VACS have been implemented in more than 20 countries, and the findings have led to national child protection action plans, strengthened legal protections, and improved survivor services.⁵ Collectively, VACS has transformed violence against children from an under-measured social issue into a measurable public health priority, equipping governments with actionable data to drive prevention and accountability.

Historically, VACS implementation has been largely supported through global HIV/AIDS resources, including funding provided through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), with CDC providing technical leadership and analytic expertise. While this structure has enabled significant progress, it has not provided a stable, dedicated congressional funding line within CDC to sustain and expand this core prevention infrastructure.

The nationally representative VACS implementations have historically cost approximately **\$2–3 million per country**, depending on scope and country context. At this cost range, a \$10 million dedicated CDC appropriation would support multiple survey implementations or repeat surveys to measure trends over time, while also providing technical assistance, capacity building, and data-to-action translation support to partner governments.

In FY26, Congress did not establish a dedicated CDC line item for VACS. Establishing and maintaining a \$10 million direct appropriation within CDC in FY27 would provide predictable, stand-alone support for survey implementation, repeat surveys to measure progress, technical assistance to partner governments, and translation of data into prevention programming.

³ UNICEF, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children* (New York: UNICEF, 2014).

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences,” 2023.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS),” 2023.

A dedicated funding stream would strengthen prevention science, enhance accountability, and ensure continuity of this critical surveillance platform independent of fluctuations in other global health accounts. Reliable data on violence against children directly supports U.S. foreign policy and global health objectives by promoting stability, reducing vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, and strengthening health and protection systems in partner countries.

Report Language: Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS). The Committee directs that not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit a report detailing countries completing VACS implementation during the fiscal year, progress in translating findings into prevention programming, U.S. technical support provided, and measurable outcomes achieved.

CDC – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Research

FY27 Request: At least \$10,000,000 for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention research within CDC’s Division of Violence Prevention

FY26 Enacted: \$3,000,000

Justification: Child sexual abuse (CSA) is both a criminal justice crisis and a public health emergency. Nearly 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys in the United States experience sexual abuse during childhood.⁶ CSA is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, substance use disorders, suicide, and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁷

The national economic burden of child sexual abuse is estimated at \$9.3 billion annually, with average lifetime productivity losses of approximately \$283,000 per survivor.⁸ Meanwhile, the United States spends approximately \$5.4 billion annually incarcerating individuals for sex crimes against children.⁹ Federal prevention research funding remains disproportionately small in comparison.

Dedicated funding of at least \$10 million would enable CDC to advance scientifically validated prevention interventions, including perpetration prevention strategies and approaches

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Preventing Child Sexual Abuse,” 2022.

⁷ Ibid.; see also Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study findings, CDC.

⁸ Letourneau, E. J., et al., “The Economic Burden of Child Sexual Abuse in the United States,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 79 (2018): 413–422.

⁹ U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Prisoners in 2021,” U.S. Department of Justice, 2022.

addressing online exploitation risks that have accelerated in the Digital Age.¹⁰ Public health research conducted through CDC uniquely focuses on population-level prevention, risk factors, and scalable interventions that reduce harm before criminal justice involvement becomes necessary.

Investing in prevention reduces long-term criminal justice, healthcare, and social service costs while protecting children and strengthening communities.

CDC – Global Health Center

FY27 Request: \$692,843,000

FY26 Enacted: \$692,843,000

Justification: Maintaining funding at \$692,843,000 sustains CDC’s global disease surveillance, immunization programs, outbreak response capacity, and workforce development initiatives that directly protect U.S. health security.

Global measles and polio outbreaks demonstrate the continuing vulnerability created by immunization gaps. Since 1988, global polio cases have declined by more than 99% due to coordinated eradication efforts supported by CDC surveillance and laboratory expertise.¹¹ Immunization investments generate an estimated \$54 return for every \$1 invested through increased productivity and reduced mortality.¹²

CDC’s Field Epidemiology Training Program has trained more than 25,000 public health professionals across 90+ countries, strengthening early detection systems that prevent cross-border disease spread.¹³ A RAND Corporation analysis found that every \$1 invested in pandemic preparedness yields approximately \$10 in economic benefit by averting large-scale disruption.¹⁴

¹⁰ National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), “CyberTipline 2023 Report.”

¹¹ Global Polio Eradication Initiative, “Polio This Week,” 2023.

¹² Ozawa, S., et al., “Return on Investment from Childhood Immunization in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 2011–20,” *Health Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2016): 199–207.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP),” 2023.

¹⁴ RAND Corporation, “The Economic Value of Global Health Security,” 2018.

Sustaining funding at the FY26 enacted level supports prevention, preparedness, and global health security—core priorities reflected in the FY26 Labor–HHS conference agreement.

Advancing U.S. Safety, Stability, and Economic Security

Together, investments in ILAB, VACS, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention research, and CDC’s Global Health Center form a comprehensive prevention strategy that advances the Committee’s priorities in public health security, workforce resilience, supply chain protection, and evidence-based intervention.

Child-focused prevention investments reduce instability, strengthen labor markets, safeguard American businesses from unfair competition, prevent disease outbreaks before they reach U.S. shores, and reduce long-term criminal justice and healthcare costs. These programs are modest in scale yet yield substantial returns for U.S. security, economic stability, and global leadership.

We respectfully urge the Subcommittee to fully fund these critical accounts in the FY27 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your leadership. If you have any questions, please contact Leila Milani at lmilani@futureswithoutviolence.org or Suzanne Berman at sberman@childfund.org. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Child Partnership