



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

***National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP)
Senate State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPS)***

March 6, 2026

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chair
House of Representatives Appropriations
Subcommittee on National Security,
Department of State, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lois Frankel, Ranking Member
House of Representatives Appropriations
Subcommittee on National Security,
Department of State, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart, Representative Frankel, Senator Graham, and Senator Schatz,

The Child Partnership is a growing coalition committed to advancing a results-driven approach to U.S. foreign assistance—one that recognizes children, youth, and families as foundational to global stability, economic growth, and American national security. As Congress begins consideration of the fiscal year 2027 Senate State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPS) bill and the National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP) bill, we thank you for your efforts to preserve key programs in your FY26 bill and urge you to reaffirm U.S. leadership by strengthening investments that protect and support the world's youngest populations.

A Sharp Downward Trajectory for Children

Over the past several years, U.S. investments in children have represented just 0.09 percent of total federal spending despite children making up 30-50 % of the population of low-income

countries. But even at these modest levels, the impact has been extraordinary, contributing to historic reductions in child mortality, expanded access to education, and greater global stability.

FY26 marks a dramatic break from this trajectory. Under current funding outcomes, spending on children's international programs falls to approximately 6 percent of International Affairs funding and just 0.03 percent of total federal spending. The dismantling of U.S. foreign assistance has had devastating consequences for children globally: cuts to USAID alone are estimated to have already contributed to the deaths of more than 300,000 children and, if sustained, could result in up to 4.5 million additional deaths of children under age five by 2030.¹ This level of disinvestment is fundamentally inconsistent with global needs, U.S. security interests, and decades of bipartisan American leadership.

This contraction comes at a moment of escalating global crises: rising armed conflict, record displacement, deepening food insecurity, and weakened health systems. Children are disproportionately affected—and the consequences of underinvestment increasingly reverberate back to the United States through instability, forced migration, disease outbreaks, and heightened strategic competition.

As Congress looks to FY27, we respectfully urge a strategic course correction.

FY27 Topline Request

The Child Partnership urges Congress to provide at least \$60 billion for the International Affairs Budget (Function 150) and at least level funding for accounts that impact children and youth, child- and youth-serving accounts including (but not limited to), the Vulnerable Children Account; Nutrition; Maternal and Child Health; Combatting Child Marriage; Water and Sanitation, the Nita M. Lowey Basic Education Fund; UNICEF Core Resources; International Humanitarian Assistance; Global Health – HIV/AIDS; and the State Department's Child Protection Compacts.

Strategic, well-coordinated investments in children represent a small share of overall federal spending, yet they deliver outsized returns for U.S. national security, economic prosperity, and global leadership. Protecting these accounts is essential to preventing crises rather than repeatedly responding to them after they escalate.

¹ First Focus on Children, *Children's Budget 2025* (Oct. 30, 2025), <https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/First-Focus-on-Children-Childrens-Budget-2025.pdf> (report and fact sheet documenting trends in child-related federal spending and international assistance).

Investing in Children and Youth Makes America Safer.

Evidence consistently shows that meeting the basic needs of children reduces the risk of conflict and political violence and strengthens national stability. Research demonstrates that lack of access to education, health care, and economic opportunity—particularly in countries with large youth populations—significantly increases the risk of instability and armed conflict.² Conversely, investments in education and child well-being strengthen economic productivity, social cohesion, and long-term national resilience.³ Investments in child health systems also improve early disease detection and response capacity, reducing the likelihood that local outbreaks escalate into global pandemics that threaten the United States.⁴ By addressing the root drivers of fragility and instability, child-focused foreign assistance strengthens global resilience while directly advancing U.S. national security interests.

Investing in Children and Youth Makes America Stronger.

In an era of strategic competition, children and youth are a decisive audience. When the United States withdraws or reduces engagement, other global actors are prepared to fill the gap—shaping future leaders’ values, allegiances, and economic partnerships. Sustained U.S. investment signals commitment, builds goodwill, and reinforces democratic norms for generations.

Investing in Children and Youth Makes America More Prosperous.

Global investments in children yield high economic returns. Education programs generate significant GDP growth in emerging economies, immunization investments return many times their cost in avoided health and productivity losses, and nutrition interventions strengthen lifelong human capital. As U.S. exports increasingly rely on low- and middle-income markets, America’s future prosperity is directly linked to the well-being of today’s children abroad.

FY27 Priorities

For FY27, the Child Partnership urges Congress to:

- **Restore and strengthen funding** for child-focused accounts that experienced reductions in FY26, including basic education and child protection initiatives.

²World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011).

³Montenegro, Claudio E., and Harry A. Patrinos, *Comparable Estimates of Returns to Schooling Around the World*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7020 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2014).

⁴National Academy of Medicine, *The Neglected Dimension of Global Security: A Framework to Counter Infectious Disease Crises* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2016).

- **Sustain and protect proven investments** in maternal and child health, nutrition, WASH, migration and refugee assistance, international disaster response, UNICEF core resources, and PEPFAR—including robust support for orphans and vulnerable children.
- **Reaffirm congressional intent through report language** encouraging a whole-child, cross-sectoral approach to foreign assistance that recognizes the interconnected needs of children, youth, and families.
- **Ensure accountability and implementation** by directing agencies to obligate, enact and disburse funds as appropriated and to report transparently on child-focused investments and outcomes.
- **Mandate that the administration stand up the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) programs** within PEPFAR that it shuttered in 2025.

The choices Congress makes in FY27 will help determine whether the next generation inherits a world defined by instability and competition—or one shaped by health, opportunity, and shared prosperity. Strategic investments in children and youth are not ancillary to U.S. foreign policy; they are central to it.

We appreciate your leadership and partnership and look forward to working with your office to advance a FY27 SFOPS and NSRP package that reflects America’s values and long-term interests. For additional information, please contact **Leila Milani** at lmilani@futureswithoutviolence.org or **Suzanne Berman** at sberman@childfund.org. We welcome the opportunity to brief your staff and discuss these priorities further.

Sincerely,

The Child Partnership

FY27 Child & Family Foreign Assistance – Topline Requests

(Updated to reflect the new State Department management structure)

Account	Agency / Bureau	FY24 Enacted	FY26 Enacted	FY27 Request
Vulnerable Children	State – Global Health Programs	\$31.5M	\$29.95M	\$31.5M
Maternal & Child Health	State – Global Health Programs	\$915M	\$915M	\$915M
Combatting Child Marriage	State – Development & Stabilization Programs	\$20M	\$15M	\$20M
Nutrition	State – Global Health Programs	\$165M	\$165M	\$165M
Basic Education	State – Basic Education	\$922M	\$691.5M	≥ \$922M
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)	State – Development & Stabilization Programs	\$451M	\$338.25M	≥ \$451M
UNICEF Core Resources	State – IO&P	\$137M	\$137M	≥ \$137M
International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA)	State – Humanitarian Assistance	—	\$5.4–5.5B	\$8.71B*
PEPFAR	State – Global Health Security & Diplomacy	\$6.045B	\$4.6B	TBD / sustain leadership
Child Protection Compacts	State – J/TIP (INCLE)	\$12.5M	\$12.5M	\$12.5M
Human Rights & Democracy Fund (DRL)	State – DRL/Democracy Fund	\$10M	—	\$10M

FY27 RECOMMENDATIONS

Topline ask: International Affairs Budget

International Affairs Budget (Function 150 Account): At least \$60 billion

FY26 enacted: \$50 billion

FY24 enacted: \$60.01 billion

Account: State

Justification: U.S. foreign assistance makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. As a key tool of soft diplomacy, programs included in the international affairs budget promote political stability; stop disease outbreaks before they put Americans at risk; build and grow export markets for American goods; improve the economies of current and future trade partners and solidify America's global leadership. If America steps back from the foreign assistance programs, our reputation will suffer, and our adversaries, including China, will step into the leadership void. It is in our economic and national security interests to robustly fund the international affairs budget (Function 150 Account).

FY27 Bill Language: The President shall obligate and disburse the entire Function 150 Account as directed by Congress.

Justification of Bill Language: The international affairs budget makes America safer and more secure. It boosts trade and goodwill for the U.S.; it reduces the need for U.S. troops on the ground; and stops diseases from reaching our shores.

Report Language Request: The Committee recognizes the strategic importance of investing in the children, youth, and families around the world. Giving young people the skills, tools, and safety they need to thrive supports political stability, global security, and economic prosperity. Investing in young people strengthens America's reputation abroad and positions the U.S. as a leader for future generations. The Committee encourages relevant agencies, in consultation with relevant congressional committees, to take a comprehensive whole child approach to U.S. foreign assistance, recognizing the critical, interconnected needs of vulnerable children and youth.

Report Language Justification: Strategic investments in children and youth around the world make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Addressing the basic needs of young people in low- and middle-income countries increases political stability, reduces the risk of diseases reaching our shores, counters the influence of China and other American adversaries, improves the global economy, and creates and builds trading relationships in growing markets. Programs in maternal and child health, nutrition, basic education, and child protection have

strong returns on investment. Low- and middle- income countries have some of the youngest and fastest-growing populations in the world. These individuals must see America as a valued partner, so they value American ideals such as freedom and democracy, strengthening America's long-term position as a global leader.

Account Requests and Justification

Vulnerable Children – FY27 Request: \$31.5 million

FY26 enacted: \$29.95 million

FY24 enacted: \$31.5 million

Account: State, Global Health Programs

Request: \$31.5 million for the Vulnerable Children Account in FY27 to ensure full implementation of the Global Child Thrive Act and to strengthen early childhood development (ECD), family-based care, and child protection systems in countries facing persistent poverty, instability, and crisis.

Justification: An estimated **250 million children under age five in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential** due to extreme poverty, malnutrition, and lack of cognitive stimulation. The long-term impacts of COVID-19—including heightened food insecurity, learning loss, and caregiver deaths—continue to undermine children’s development, with more than **8 million children having lost a parent or primary caregiver** globally. Ongoing conflict, displacement, and climate-related crises further compound these risks.

Funding at \$31.5 million will support implementation of the **Global Child Thrive Act**, enacted with bipartisan support in 2021, which requires measurable progress in early childhood development and strengthening of care systems for children in adversity. These resources also advance the U.S. Government’s **Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA)** strategy by:

- Integrating early childhood development interventions across health, nutrition, education, and protection programs
- Strengthening family-based care and reducing unnecessary institutionalization
- Preventing violence, abuse, neglect, trafficking, and exploitation

Early childhood development interventions build foundational brain architecture and include access to adequate nutrition, safe water and sanitation, responsive caregiving, early learning, and protection services. Evidence demonstrates that high-quality ECD investments can yield returns of up to **13 percent per year**, strengthening lifetime productivity, educational attainment, and economic growth.

Investments in vulnerable children are also a strategic national security priority. By helping children remain safe, in school, and within families, these programs address key drivers of instability, irregular migration, and trafficking. Strengthening human capital in fragile and developing countries promotes long-term stability and supports the development of reliable economic and security partners for the United States.

Report Language Request: The Committee directs that the President’s annual budget submission and the annual Children in Adversity report include detailed information on cross-cutting funding requested and obligated for Early Childhood Development, including amounts integrated across health, nutrition, education, protection, and humanitarian accounts.

Report Language Justification: Transparent reporting on ECD funding will allow Congress to assess progress toward the core objectives of the Global Child Thrive Act and ensure sustained, measurable impact for children in adversity.

Maternal and Child Health - FY 27 Request: \$915 million

FY26 enacted: \$915 million

FY24 enacted: \$915 million

Account: State, Global Health Programs

Justification: The USAID maternal and child health bilateral account provides resources that improve the accessibility and quality of basic interventions that save millions of lives in countries where the burden of preventable maternal and child deaths is the highest. The account supports the training of health workers, increases access to skilled birth attendants, and promotes the delivery of childhood immunizations globally, including through direct support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and polio vaccination campaigns. Sustained funding for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, would enable Gavi to continue supporting the rollout of the malaria vaccines, increase access to routine immunizations, and help to prevent outbreaks. Similarly, USAID’s polio program funding supports surveillance and outbreak responses to polio and other diseases, such as Marburg and Ebola. It is in the national security interests of the U.S. to prevent disease outbreaks at their source. One of the most effective ways to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases in the U.S. is to improve vaccination rates abroad, as most cases occur following travel by a U.S. citizen overseas.

Combatting Child Marriage Account - FY 27 Request: \$20 million

FY26 enacted: \$15 million

FY24 enacted: \$20 million

Account: State, Development & Stabilization Programs

Justification: Globally, one in five girls, an estimated 640 million women and girls alive today, were married before their 18th birthday, and rates are rising again due to conflict, displacement, and economic crisis. Nine of the ten countries with the highest child-marriage prevalence are fragile or extremely fragile states, making child marriage a leading indicator of social breakdown and instability. In regions such as the Sahel, more than half of adolescent girls—approximately 20 million—are married as children, exposing them to early pregnancy, violence, and school dropout while weakening communities’ economic and social foundations.

Child marriage fuels intergenerational poverty, irregular migration, trafficking, and vulnerability to criminal and extremist recruitment, especially in humanitarian settings where families use early marriage as a survival strategy. Ending child marriage is therefore not only a human rights priority—it is a strategic investment in stability, self-reliance, and U.S. national security, helping fragile countries build more resilient families, stronger economies, and safer societies.

Nutrition - FY 27 Request: \$165 million

FY26 enacted: \$165 million

FY24 enacted: \$165 million

Account: State, Global Health Programs

Justification: Malnutrition is the greatest threat to child survival and optimal brain development worldwide, killing roughly 3 million children before their fifth birthday every year. High-impact nutrition interventions make a significant difference for the future of many children experiencing malnutrition in their communities. Every \$1 invested in nutrition programming has the potential to yield up to \$35 in economic returns. An investment of \$165 million could prevent stunting, cure cases of anemia, support mothers to breastfeed, and provide life-saving treatment for children experiencing wasting in development settings.

Basic Education - FY 27 Request: At least \$922 million

FY26 enacted: \$691.5 million

FY24 enacted: \$922 million

FY23 enacted: \$970 million

Account: State, Basic Education

Justification: International basic education programs make America stronger, safer, and more prosperous. The READ Act of 2017 and its reauthorization in 2024 outlines the U.S. Government’s commitment to improving access to quality education. Education programs

encourage future trade partners, improve the global economy, bolster peace and security, and strengthen public health. In FY23, U.S. Government education programs supported 44 million learners across pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational, and workforce development programs. These efforts strengthen the U.S. reputation abroad, particularly in areas with large populations of children and youth. Research shows that increasing access to education reduces political violence and conflict. Doubling the percentage of youth with secondary education can cut the risk of conflict in half, and secondary education can reduce the likelihood of young people supporting political violence by 48%. 251 million children are out of school globally, and three out of four children in low- to middle- income countries cannot read and understand simple text. One in six children live in areas affected by conflict, and nearly half of all refugee children were out of school in 2024. Providing educational opportunities for these children and youth will provide a pathway for them to respect and admire the U.S. and its values, avoid political conflicts, and support their countries' trade partnership with America.

Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) - FY 27 Request: At least \$451 million

FY26 enacted: \$338.25 million

FY24 enacted: \$451 million

FY23 enacted: \$475 million

Account: State, Development & Stabilization Programs

Justification: Twenty-five percent of people still lack safe drinking water in their homes, and 40% of the world's population lack safely managed sanitation. Safe water and adequate sanitation are essential to child survival and development, improving children's education, increasing productivity, and building resilience in the face of disease and disaster. Since 2008, USAID has helped 70 million people access sustainable drinking water services and 54.8 million people access sustainable sanitation services. Under the U.S. Global Water Strategy (2022-2027), under Congressional requirement under PL 113-289, USAID seeks to reach 22 million people with new or improved access to water and sanitation, half of whom have never had access to basic water and/or sanitation. These investments in WASH access in homes, health care facilities, and schools directly contribute to other U.S. global health priorities affecting children, including improving child nutrition, reducing acute malnutrition, and ending preventable child and maternal deaths.

UNICEF Core Resources - FY 27 Request: At least \$137 million

FY26 enacted: \$137 million (*UN Children's Fund -The agreement includes funds for the UN Children's Fund consistent with prior year levels*)

FY24 enacted: \$137 million

Account: State, International Organizations and Programs

Justification: Overlapping crises, from persistent conflict to natural disasters and disease outbreaks and rising levels of food insecurity, have made UNICEF's work more important than ever. Today, 1 in 6 children live amid conflict and insecurity, with record-high levels of population displacement and migration. These trends increase children's vulnerability to crime and violent extremism and fuel further instability. UNICEF and its partners are rising to the challenge, helping to minimize displacement and build self-reliance. UNICEF is also on the frontlines of dangerous disease outbreaks, from Ebola to mpox, helping stop the spread of these dangerous diseases before they reach American shores. In 2024, UNICEF supported mothers and babies at more than 34 million live births; reached 210 million children under the age of 5 to detect and treat wasting – the most severe form of malnutrition; provided safe water to nearly 36 million people; extended access to education to nearly 40 million children (half of them girls) and more than 17 million children living in crisis settings, and responded to one or more infectious disease outbreaks or other public health emergencies in 98 different countries. Contributing at least \$137 million to the account will help ensure that UNICEF can continue to reach children with health, protection, and nutrition services that also help reduce drivers of conflict, migration, and instability. This work not only assists children to reach their full potential, but it also advances U.S. interests and American values while promoting a more secure, stable and healthier world.

International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) - FY27 Request: \$8.71 billion

(FY26 enacted: \$5.5 billion – consolidating International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance)

Account: State, Humanitarian Assistance

The FY26 conference agreement consolidated **International Disaster Assistance (IDA)** and **Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)** into a single **International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA)** account. While this consolidation offers administrative flexibility, it does not reduce the scale or urgency of humanitarian need, particularly for children, who comprise the majority of those affected by conflict, displacement, disasters, and food insecurity.

Children account for nearly **40 percent of the global refugee population** and **almost half of all internally displaced people**. They face disproportionate risks of malnutrition, preventable disease, trafficking, forced labor, early marriage, and recruitment by armed groups. In crisis settings, children are often the first to lose access to food, healthcare, education, and protection, and the last to recover without sustained support.

Under the former structure, **IDA funded life-saving emergency assistance** for children and families in disasters and conflict, including nutrition, health, water, sanitation, shelter, and child protection, while **MRA funded protection and durable solutions for refugee and displaced children**, including education in emergencies, psychosocial care, family reunification, and protection from exploitation and abuse. These core child-focused functions remain essential and must be fully preserved under the consolidated IHA account.

Justification: Global humanitarian need has reached historic levels. Armed conflict, climate shocks, economic instability, and food insecurity have driven unprecedented displacement and suffering. Millions of children are living in crisis conditions where hunger, disease, and violence threaten their survival and long-term development. Without timely humanitarian assistance, children face irreversible harm, stunting, trauma, loss of schooling, and exposure to exploitation that undermines stability for generations.

The IHA account must support the full continuum of humanitarian assistance that children need to survive and recover, from emergency nutrition and health services to safe shelter, clean water, and sanitation, to protection, education, and psychosocial care for refugee and displaced children. These investments reduce child mortality, prevent trafficking and abuse, and help families remain intact and resilient during crises.

Failure to meet these needs has direct consequences for U.S. interests. When children go hungry, unprotected, and out of school, communities become more vulnerable to instability, armed recruitment, and forced migration. Humanitarian investments that protect children are among the most effective tools the United States has to stabilize fragile regions, reduce displacement, and prevent crises from escalating into security and migration challenges.

The FY26 enacted level of **\$5.4 billion** for IHA represents a significant constraint on the humanitarian system at a time of growing global need. For FY27, **\$6.8 billion** is necessary to ensure that the consolidated IHA account can fully deliver on the life-saving, child-protective functions previously funded through IDA and MRA, without forcing harmful trade-offs between food, health, shelter, protection, and education.

Sustained, adequately funded humanitarian assistance is a direct investment in children's survival, regional stability, and U.S. global leadership. The FY27 IHA request ensures that the United States remains able to respond to crises, protect the most vulnerable, and uphold its longstanding commitment to children and families in need.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) - FY 27 Request: \$4.63 billion
FY26 Conferenced: \$4.6 billion for PEPFAR

FY24 Enacted: \$6.04 billion

Account: State, Global Health Security & Diplomacy

Justification: When the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched in 2003, an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence in low-resource settings. Over 20 years later, PEPFAR has

- saved 26 million lives,
- enabled 7.8 million babies to be born HIV-free,
- supported 13 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) with food, access to school and protection from abuse and neglect,
- provided livelihood support to OVC caregivers to start microbusinesses,
- prevented over 10 million girls from being sexually abused and trafficked.

PEPFAR also boosted goodwill toward the United States, especially in Africa where the U.S. competes with China for access to strategic partnerships. According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center](#), countries that have received PEPFAR support had an average approval rating of the United States of 68% compared with the global average of 46%.

PEPFAR has played a role in promoting global security, stability, and good governance. According to World Bank data, since 2004, PEPFAR countries in Sub-Saharan Africa reduced political instability and violent activity by 40% compared with only 3% among non-PEPFAR countries in the region.

Finally, PEPFAR has reduced forced migration and greatly expanded global health systems’ capacity to control emerging transborder infectious disease threats. PEPFAR is one of the major public health successes of our country.

FY27 Report Language: Orphans and Vulnerable Children. —The Committee directs the Secretary of State to stand up the President Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs that previous to 2025 were a critical mechanism for keeping alive and healthy millions of children infected or affected by HIV. In addition, the Committee directs that at least 10 percent of overall bilateral HIV funding be provided to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programs and that the nutrition, protection, and family-strengthening interventions for children who are living with, orphaned by or at risk of HIV be prioritized. The Committee deems socio-economic OVC programs to be lifesaving as they ensure orphans and vulnerable children are connected to testing and treatment programs, adhere to treatment

regimens if they are HIV positive, that they receive nutritious food to remain healthy and that they are protected from violence, abuse and sex trafficking. Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the act, the Committee directs the Secretary of State to provide a strategy for reinstating OVC programs at the Bureau of Global Health Security & Diplomacy, to obligate, expend and implement OVC programs utilizing at least 10 % of bilateral HIV resources annually, and a plan for reporting annually on the number of children and caregivers reached.

Bill language: The Committee directs that orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) programs be reinstated at the Department of State and that 10 percent of overall bilateral HIV funding be obligated, expended and implemented annually for the care and support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children infected and affected by HIV.

Justification for OVC programs: In every authorization of PEPFAR and in the past few State Foreign Operations bills, Congress has mandated that PEPFAR invest 10% of its funding in the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children to protect and mitigate the impact of HIV on these children. The burden of HIV negatively impacts all aspects of a child's life, their mental and physical health, their nutritional status, their educational achievements, and their risk for future HIV infection. The threat and burden of HIV put a tremendous strain on all aspects of socio-economic and health outcomes in an affected community. Before DOGE shut them down, PEPFAR OVC programs were supporting 6.6 million orphans and vulnerable children and their caregivers with interventions that ensured affected children enjoyed good nutrition, access to school and psychosocial support to address stigma and that their caregivers had access to savings and livelihood support. These holistic services kept children's families together and functioning and connected them to HIV treatment services if they were HIV positive. In the 5 years before OVC programs were dismantled, they also protected 10.55 million girls from exploitation, trafficking and abuse. In fact, PEPFAR's adolescent girls' programs, the majority of which were funded by the OVC set aside, reduced their experiences of sexual violence by 65% in Malawi and 68% in Kenya. Overall, PEPFAR's OVC programs had a Return on Investment (ROI) rate of 4:1.

Child Protection Compacts - FY 27 Request: \$12.5 million

FY26 enacted: \$12.5 million

FY24 enacted: \$12.5 million

State, J/TIP - International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) TIP Grants

FY26 Report Language: Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the headings "Development Assistance", "Economic Support Fund", "Assistance for Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia," "International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement", \$12,500,000 be made

available to the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) for Child Protection Compacts (CPC).

Justification: CPCs are \$5 million multi-year commitments between the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (JTIP) and partner governments to bolster efforts to combat child labor and sex trafficking. The CPC Partnership supports the sustainable development of partner governments’ capacity to hold perpetrators of child sex and labor trafficking accountable under the law, provide comprehensive services for child trafficking survivors, and expand child trafficking prevention and awareness. The Philippines, a global hotspot for online sexual exploitation and abuse of children, has participated in two CPC Partnerships, which have supported its capacity to improve prevention efforts, provide effective and appropriate child protective services to victims and identify perpetrators and bring them to justice. An FY26 allocation of at least \$12.5 million for CPC Partnerships will allow for additional compacts to support governments around the world that currently lack the infrastructure and capacity to respond to similar forms of child trafficking.

Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) - FY27 Requested: \$10 million

(Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor – DRL)

FY24 Enacted: \$10 million

Account: State, DRL/Democracy Fund

Report Language:

“Of the funds made available for the Human Rights and Democracy Fund, Department of State, the Committee directs that \$10,000,000 shall be allocated to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) for the implementation of human rights, labor, and democracy grants. Of this amount, not less than \$2,000,000 shall be used for initiatives that explicitly prioritize advocacy, prevention, and capacity-building activities to protect children and youth from trafficking, sexual exploitation, and forced labor.”

Justification: The global trafficking and exploitation of children has reached crisis levels, requiring targeted U.S. leadership through the Department of State’s human rights and labor programming. Children now account for approximately 27 percent of all detected human trafficking victims worldwide, with girls representing two-thirds of identified child trafficking victims.⁵ According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), detected trafficking cases have increased by 25 percent in recent years, driven in large part by sharp rises in child sexual exploitation and forced labor.⁶

This crisis is being further amplified by the rapid growth of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children. In 2022, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) analyzed over 32 million reports of child sexual abuse material from around the world — an 87 percent increase compared to 2019, reflecting the expanding reach of digital exploitation networks.⁷

The **Human Rights and Democracy Fund**, administered by the **Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)**, is the State Department’s principal mechanism for supporting civil society, survivor-centered services, labor rights enforcement, and accountability efforts that prevent trafficking and protect children. Placing DRL’s grants within the FY27 Democracy Fund and National Security Investment Programs framework reinforces Congress’s recognition that human rights, child protection, and rule of law are central to U.S. national security and global stability.

A \$10 million allocation to DRL, with at least \$2 million dedicated to child- and youth-focused trafficking prevention and protection, would ensure that the United States continues to lead globally in combating exploitation, strengthening frontline civil society partners, and disrupting the criminal networks that profit from the abuse of children.

⁵ Save the Children. (n.d.). Child trafficking awareness. Save the Children. <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/child-trafficking-awareness>

⁶ Save the Children. (n.d.). Child trafficking awareness. Save the Children. <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/child-trafficking-awareness>

⁷ WeProtect Global Alliance. (2023). Global Threat Assessment 2023. <https://www.weprotect.org/wp-content/uploads/Global-Threat-Assessment-2023-English.pdf>