



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 14, 2019

**CONTACT:**

Heather Sabharwal  
hsabharwal@childfund.org  
202-423-5879

## **Congressional Resolution Calls on U.S. Government to Address Violence Against Children Globally**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Ending Violence Against Children Taskforce applauds Sens. Boozman and Cardin and Reps. McGovern and Wilson for introducing Sen. Res. 112 and its companion H. Res. 230 today. Written with input by the Taskforce, which includes ChildFund International, Futures Without Violence, Save the Children, UNICEF USA and World Vision, the resolution condemns all forms of violence against children and youth while encouraging the development of a strategy for preventing, addressing and ending violence against children and youth globally.

The resolution is part of a multi-year advocacy effort led by the Ending Violence Against Children Taskforce, a group of international non-governmental organizations committed to addressing the global prevalence of physical and emotional violence. Continued engagement by the Taskforce organizations with members of Congress galvanized the support and ultimate introduction of the resolution.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion children worldwide are exposed to violence in their homes, schools and other places that are presumed to be safe. Violence, when unaddressed, damages children’s learning, behavior and health across a lifetime. Violence against children undermines our development efforts around the globe. In schools, 246 million boys and girls experience gender-based violence, with girls at a higher risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation. School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to ensuring girls’ access to basic education. Around the world, nearly one in three adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 suffered from the effects of violence.

The Ending Violence Against Children resolution also calls on Congress to recognize the economic consequences of violence against children and youth. The global economic impact of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children may be as high as \$7 trillion, or 8 percent of the world’s GDP.

“The outcomes the United States hopes to achieve with our global economic development initiatives will struggle to fully take hold in countries where violence against children goes unaddressed,” said Sen. John Boozman, lead sponsor of the resolution. “Horrific acts like human trafficking and child labor have tragic lifelong consequences for individual children and devastate entire communities. This bipartisan resolution sends a strong message that a plan to end violence against children must be a priority in our global development strategy.”



Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland, who is a lead cosponsor of the resolution, echoed the gravity of the issue, stating, “Millions of children around the world have lost their childhoods to physical, sexual and mental violence and abuse. As adults, it is our responsibility to keep them safe and prevent the types of inhumane treatment and developmental roadblocks found in far too many corners of the world. This is a local issue and a global one. I am proud to stand with Sen. Boozman to lead the call for the U.S. government to develop and implement a strategy to address the widespread dangers being faced by children and youth that is in line with international standards and sustainable development goals.”

The World Health Organization, along with the Centers for Disease Control, the President’s Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, UNICEF and others have developed INSPIRE, a package of evidence-based interventions to reduce rates of violence against children. The coordinated approach adopts common metrics and indicators that can be used by U.S. government agencies to prevent, address and end violence against children and youth globally.

“Now is the time for Congress to lead on the important issue of eliminating violence against children,” said Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, who introduced the resolution in the House. “As more families flee their home countries to escape violence, we must take up the commonsense actions laid out in this bipartisan resolution to protect as many children as possible.”

Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina joined Rep. McGovern in leading this effort, adding, “This important bipartisan resolution sends a clear message across the world: Congress cares about the plight of millions of children exposed to violence. Our moral duty requires us to be the advocates for those whose lives are forever affected by the tragic consequences of violence. We must do everything in our power to increase our commitment to ensuring that all children can live in a safe environment, without having to endure violence in any form. I am grateful to work with Congressman Jim McGovern on this critical issue.”