



keep kids safe

prevention. healing. justice.

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Vice President Kamala Harris
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20050

March 24, 2021

Call for a U.S. Presidential Initiative to “End Sexual Violence Against Children”

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

Sexual violence against children and adolescents living in the United States is rampant, constitutes a public health pandemic, and causes grave physical and psychological trauma and social havoc.¹² To address this crisis, we request that you recognize April 8, 2021 in the United States as an annual “World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing and Justice,” and that you launch a bold Presidential Initiative to “End Sexual Violence Against Children” during the first 200 days of your Administration, inclusive of prevention, healing and justice. The Initiative should include the following actions:

- **Mobilize Congress to Approve Comprehensive National Legislation, the “End Sexual Violence Against Children Act,” Informed by a U.S. Presidential Commission:** As President, we call on you to effectively address the pandemic of sexual violence against children in the United States by mobilizing Congress to pass comprehensive national legislation, increase federal funding for programs and research, and expand federal incentives to improve state laws to launch large scale prevention, healing, and justice programs to prevent violence, protect survivors, and reduce the cost of sexual violence against children to society.

¹ Sexual violence consists of a range of sexual acts against a child, including but not limited to child sexual abuse, incest, rape, sexual violence in the context of dating/intimate relationships, sexual exploitation, online sexual abuse and exploitation, and non-contact sexual abuse.

² Children is defined as 0-18 years of age.



As President, we call on you to institute a Presidential Commission to End Sexual Violence Against Children (The Commission). The Commission would be comprised of experts including researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and, importantly, adult survivors and would act as a catalyst to collect and synthesize data and research so that policymakers and the public would garner a comprehensive understanding of the crisis, the costs to society and the potential to scale-up available solutions to prevent, heal, and ensure justice.

- **Declare Sexual Violence Against Children a US Public Health Emergency:** As President, we call on you to use your executive authority to officially declare sexual violence against children and adolescents a public health emergency and mandate an annual U.S. Surgeon General’s report.
- **Expand US Support for Global Programs to End Sexual Violence Against Children:** As President, we call on you to expand US leadership to galvanize global action to end sexual violence against children and adolescents by integrating this issue in our foreign policy and by increasing international funding to support prevention, healing and justice programs.

Should questions arise, if you need additional information, or if you or your staff would like to meet with members of this movement to discuss these issues, please contact Denise Edwards at National Children’s Alliance: dedwards@nca-online.org, Jill Ruck at Child USA: jruck@childusa.org or Paul Zeitz at Together for Girls: drpaulzeitz@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Teresa Huizar
Executive Director
National Children’s
Alliance

Katelyn Brewer
President and CEO
Darkness to Light

Grace French
Survivor, Founder and
President
The Army of Survivors

**Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran,
MSW**
Executive Director
The Army of Survivors

Zach Hiner
Executive Director
SNAP Network

Marci Hamilton
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Dr. Daniela Ligiero
Survivor and CEO
Together for Girls

Dr. Melissa Merrick
President and CEO
Prevent Child Abuse
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Katie Hanna
Coalition President
National Coalition to
Prevent Child Sexual
Abuse and Exploitation

Scott Berkowitz
President, RAINN

Jennifer Wortham, DrPH
Founder and Chair of the
April 8th Collaborative

Dr. Paul Zeitz
#IncestMeToo Survivor
and Executive Director,
Build A Movement 2022

Dr. Paige Alisen

Survivor and Author,
“Finding Courage to
Speak”

Laura Askowitz

CEO, KidSafe Foundation

Gary Barker

President and CEO,
Promundo-US

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Director, Child and
Adolescent Health
Measurement Initiative;
Professor, Bloomberg
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Chief Executive, Keeping
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Dr. Mary Ellsberg

Survivor and Director,
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Dr. Howard R. Fradkin

Independent Trauma
Psychologist

Dr. Jennifer J. Freyd

Founder and President,
Center for Institutional
Courage

Dr. Lyndon Haviland

Chair, Foundation Board,
CUNY School of Public
Health

Margaret Hoelzer

US Olympian, National
Spokesperson, National
Children's Advocacy
Center

Dr. Myra Jones-Taylor

Chief Policy Officer, ZERO
to THREE

Dr. Keith L. Kaufman

National Safety Consultant
and Professor

Stacie LeBlanc

President, The American
Professional Society on the
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Bruce Lesley

President, First Focus on
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Dr. Elizabeth Letourneau

Director, Moore Center for
the Prevention of Child
Sexual Abuse, Johns Hopkins
Bloomberg School of Public
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Timothy Lennon

President, SNAP
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Gary Kosman

CEO, America Learns

Erin Merryn

President, Erin's Law

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Survivor, Founder and
Director, EDJA
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Jeannette Pai-Espinosa

President, National
Crittenton

Amy Paulson

Survivor, Founder and
CEO, Gratitude Alliance

Lorie Poland

Survivor, Executive
Director, National
Foundation to End Child
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Director, Center on
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School of Medicine

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Abuse Prevention
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Executive Director, The
American Professional
Society on the Abuse of
Children

Esta Soler

President and Founder,
Futures Without
Violence

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Executive Director,
MassKids

Kristen Bierma
Executive Director,
Beacon Hill

Astrid Gamez
Executive Director,
Family Services Network

Christy Keating, J.D.
Owner and CEO, Savvy
Parents Safe Kids

Kevin Koscielniak
Founder, The Buffalo
Survivors Group

David S. Lee
Deputy Director, ValorUS

Sarah Marikos
Executive Director, ACE
Resource Network

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Founder, President and
CEO, Global Policy
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Consulting, LLC

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Silence

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Children's Trust Fund
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Centers of Texas

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Child Advocacy

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II Sports

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Executive Director, Delta
Crisis Center, Inc.

Kevin A. Trapani
Co-founder and CEO, The
Redwoods Group

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Manager, Golden Door
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Breaking Silence

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Children's Advocacy
Center of Eastern
Arkansas

LaDonna Hall
Clinical Services Director,
Southwest Virginia
Children's Advocacy
Center

Donna Hopkins Britt
Education Facilitator,
Children's Trust

Tracy McQueen
Trauma Advocacy
Coordinator, ASSIST
Indiana

Tiffany Kelly
Clinical Program Director,
Lutheran Community
Services Northwest

Rachel Anderton
Prescott House Child
Advocacy Center

Gia Brooks
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
Health Board

Amy Cozart
District Social Service
Counselor, Mooresville
Graded School District

Kristen Crim
Memphis Child Advocacy
Center

Tammi Collins
Columbus County
District Attorney's Office

Sharon Eberhard
Life Stories Child &
Family Advocacy

Michaela Gaither
A Child's Voice Child
Advocacy Center, Inc.

Margaret S. Girdler
Tech Coordinator, CCR&R

Priti Griffin
Raise Me Up Foundation

Debbie Jenae
Founder, Inspired 101

Hannah Palm
Oxbow Farm and
Conservation Center

**Diana Rojas
Hohenberger**
Realtor, Palmer House
Properties Atlanta

Jennifer Samartano
Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois

Nicole Schrock
The Child Advocacy
Center

Marquita Smiley
Alabama Dept of Human
Resources

Vanessa Southworth
Family & Children's
Center

Mollyanne Vasquez
Center for Child
Protection

Samuel West
Our Children Matter
Mid-TN

Pamela Wallace
Program Coordinator,
Project Child

Jessica Wauchek
Bilingual D2L Facilitator,
Child Advocacy Center of
Rutherford County, Inc.



March 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The April 8 Collaborative is a coalition of survivor networks and child welfare advocacy organizations working to establish an annual world day of observance to help raise awareness and promote global child sexual abuse prevention, healing, and justice initiatives.

April has been designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the United States since 1983. In 2009, President Barak Obama officially proclaimed April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This year, we ask that you acknowledge the April 8 World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing, and Justice as part of these traditions.

As you know from your leadership in ending violence against children, sexual abuse is among the most significant violations of dignity a person can experience. This is a tragic crime that often destroys the opportunity for those so ruthlessly violated to achieve their full potential.

While many countries, including the United States, are working diligently to enact policies to protect children, tragically, 1 in 10 adults report experiencing sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. In some parts of the world, one out of every two children have experienced child sexual abuse.

Because of the shame, stigma, and fear associated with their experience, sixty percent of victims never disclose their abuse. Many of these individuals suffer in silence, often living anguished lives. If they do not get the help they need to heal, they will likely experience long-term consequences to their physical and mental health, wellbeing, and economic independence.

Child sexual abuse is a serious global public health crisis impacting our nation and the world. We believe survivors of child sexual abuse deserve to know that their lives matter, that what they experienced was unjust, and that healing is possible. We believe the time has come for all nations to stand with us, speak out, commit resources, and work together to protect children against sexual abuse and help those who experienced child sexual abuse to heal.

We ask that you join us in solidarity by proclaiming the April 8 World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing, and Justice, a national day of observance in the United States. We believe this action will help raise funding, restore justice, bring healing to survivors of child sexual abuse, and make the world a safer place for all children.

Thank you for considering our request.

Respectfully

Community of Survivors and Advocates Supporting the April 8 World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing and Justice



Jennifer Wortham, Dr.PH, Founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director, Initiative on Health, Religion, and Spirituality, Harvard University



Melissa Merrick, Ph.D, Co-founder April 8 Collaborative. President & Chief Executive Officer Prevent Child Abuse America



Daniela Ligiero, PhD, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director & CEO Together for Girls



Lynn Layton, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President and CEO Monique Burr Foundation for Children



Marian Simmons-St.Clair, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. International President, General Federation of Women's Clubs



Asher Lovy, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Director Community Organizing ZA'AKAH



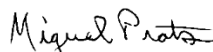
Col. Don Christensen, USAF (Ret), Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President, Protect Our Defenders



Gerald J. McGlone, SJ, PhD, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative, Senior Research Fellow Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University



Tyler VanderWeele, PhD, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Professor, and Director, Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University



Miguel Prats, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Founder and President of the Maria Goretti Network



Stacie Schrieffer LeBlanc, M.Ed., J.D., Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children



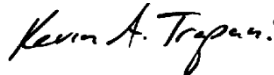
Michael Hoffman, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Past President, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois



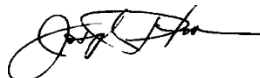
Lyndon Haviland, MPH, DrPH, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Distinguished Scholar, Chair, CUNY School of Public Health Foundation



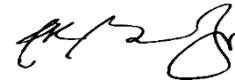
Katelyn N. Brewer, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President & CEO, Darkness to Light



Kevin A. Trapani, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Co-Founder and CEO, The Redwoods Group



Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Vice President, The New York Board of Rabbis



Rev. Dr. A.R. Bernard, Sr., Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Senior Pastor, Christian Cultural Center



Anne Lee, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Founder Darkness to Light



Dr. Paul Zeitz, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Survivor & Executive Director, Build A Movement 2022



Pellagia Gambiza, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director, Shine on Sierra Leone



Mark Mathews, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director, Child Abuse Council



Victor Vieth, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Chief Program Officer, Zero Abuse Project



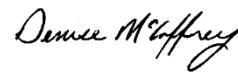
Zach Hiner, Co-founder, April 8, Collaborative. Executive Director, Survivor Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP)



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Denise McCaffrey, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois



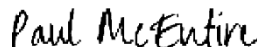
Jetta Bernier, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Director, MassKids & the Enough Abuse Campaign



Murray Shane, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President, Male Survivors



Natoschia Scruggs, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Director, End FGM/C U.S. Network



Paul McEntire, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Executive Vice President/Chief Operations Officer YMCA OF THE USA



Anwar Khan. Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. President, Islamic Relief USA

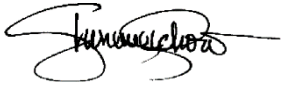


Gracie French, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative. Founder and President, Army of Survivors



Howard Taylor PhD, Co-founder, April 8, Collaborative. Executive Director, End Violence Partnership

Community of Survivors and Advocates Supporting the April 8 World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing and Justice



Sherianne Schow, Co-founder, April 8, Collaborative.
Acting, Executive Director, Their Story is our Story



Shira Berkovits, Esq., Ph.D., Co-founder, April 8
Collaborative. President & CEO, Sacred Spaces



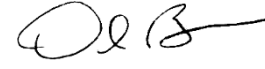
Matthew T Lee, Ph.D., Co-founder, April 8
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Brendan Case, Th.D., Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
Associate Director, Human Flourishing Program, Harvard
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Rick Gorab, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President & CEO, Metropolitan YMCA of the
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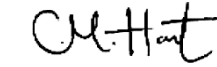
Dale Brunner, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President/CEO, YMCA OF GREATER DAYTON



Barbara A. Bettin, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President/CEO, YMCA of Lincoln, NE



Anne Brigis, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President & CEO, YMCA OF LONG ISLAND



Chad M. Hart, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
CEO, Hopkins County Family YMCA



Abigail Farris Rogers. Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President & CEO, YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND



Stephen Ives, Co-founder, April 8 Collaborative.
President, YMCA OF GREATER HOUSTON



Sage Williams, Director of Global Affairs, April 8
Collaborative



Pastor David Dankwah, Director of Faith and Religious
Community Engagement, April 8 Collaborative



Sarah Smart, Director of Research, April 8
Collaborative



Darien Laird, Director of Communications, April 8
Collaborative