



END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The Strengthening Efforts to End Violence Against Children Act

Introduction

Globally, nearly 1 billion children are exposed to violence every year. Violence against children includes all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and physical, sexual, and emotional violence — including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labor, cyber abuse, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage.¹ World Vision's global campaign to end violence against children, *It Takes a World*, seeks to address the root causes of this violence and protect the most vulnerable among us.

Why it matters

Recent conflicts, natural disasters, and the aftershocks of COVID-19 further increase the risks of violence against children. We need more coordination by the U.S. government on increased reporting and fact-finding to better measure our progress and to inform future work. With this coordination, we can implement a holistic, evidence-based approach toward protecting children around the world.

Quick facts

- A World Vision report estimates that up to 85 million more children may be victims of violence due to the secondary impacts of COVID-19.²
- About one in three teen girls aged 15 to 19 have been victims of emotional, physical, or sexual violence, which is often perpetrated by individuals the girls know.³
- Tens of millions of children are estimated to be living outside of family care, and gaps in data and services make them especially vulnerable to violence.⁴

ASK

This legislation will direct and bolster the U.S. government's efforts to address violence against children around the globe. Please cosponsor the Strengthening Efforts to End Violence Against Children Act (SEEVAC).

About the bill

The Strengthening Efforts to End Violence Against Children Act (SEEVAC) builds on the recently passed House Resolution 230, which sought to increase awareness of global violence against children and called for greater U.S. government coordination. SEEVAC seeks to codify critical tools and holistic strategies to better leverage existing resources, as well as update the scope and mission of the Office of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to better reflect the current needs of vulnerable children. The legislation would:

➤ Elevate the needs of children most at risk of violence by:

- Providing stronger focus on children outside of family care through USAID's coordinated government strategy and providing mental health support for this vulnerable group
- Implementing culturally appropriate mental health and psychosocial support for children associated with armed forces, or child soldiers
- Recognizing that child protection interventions can be lifesaving in humanitarian settings, leading to faster deployment of child protection resources

➤ Modernize the Office of Orphans and Vulnerable Children at USAID by:

- Mandating the use of evidence-based interventions, such as the INSPIRE strategies, in protecting vulnerable children in multiple contexts
- Updating this office's scope of work to reflect current goals of USAID's Plan for Advancing the Protection and Care for Children in Adversity
- Naming the Special Advisor on Children in Adversity as the author of the whole-of-government strategy for addressing violence against children

➤ Call for increased research and data gathering by:

- Demonstrating the importance of Violence Against Children Surveys in tracking violence-prevention efforts as well as implementing future interventions
- Directing the U.S. strategy for ending violence against children to utilize data-driven surveys, such as the Center for Disease Control's Violence Against Children Surveys

ABOUT THE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SURVEYS

Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS) are invaluable tools in measuring and directing interventions to address violence against children around the world. A baseline survey is followed by a later survey to track progress and effectiveness. Administered by the Centers for Disease Control in partnership with Together for Girls, these surveys are conducted in 15 countries so far. VACS conducted in Honduras in 2017 found that:

- **Two of five Honduran children experience some form of violence in their lives.**
- **Three of 10 experience physical violence, the most common form of violence in the country.**
- **One in five girls are married before age 18.**

As a result of the findings, the Honduran government has resolved to implement their National Response Plan for addressing this violence through the INSPIRE strategies.



References

¹ <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/01/25/peds.2015-4079>

² <https://www.wvi.org/publications/report/coronavirus-health-crisis/covid-19-aftershocks-perfect-storm>

³ UNICEF. A Statistical Snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls. 2014

⁴ UNICEF. State of the World's Children: Children in an Urban World, Chapter 2: Children's Rights in Urban Settings. 2012.