

December 14, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell and Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

As Christian faith-based organizations that firmly believe in the sanctity of human life, Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA), Christian Connections in Health (CCIH), and World Vision write to you in proud support of the Keeping Girls in School Act ([H.R. 4134/S.2276](#)) and to urge you to include the operational section of the bill in the Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus.

The Keeping Girls in School Act is a critical piece of legislation that would address the challenges girls are facing in accessing secondary educational opportunities. We are particularly appreciative of the significant changes to improve the bipartisan support for the bill that were made ahead of the House Foreign Affairs Committee mark-up.

Due to school closures over the past two years, the percentage of 10-year olds in learning poverty—meaning they cannot read even a simple sentence—increased from 57% to 70% in low and middle income countries (Source: *The State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update*, World Bank, USAID, et. al.). In fact, the latest research shows that this generation of students now risks losing \$21 trillion in potential lifetime earnings in present value.

By contrast, girls completing secondary school have the potential to generate up to a 20% increase in GDP levels. But this doesn't capture the full tragedy of children unable to fully develop their talents or reach their goals. Simply put, investments in girls' access to education are perhaps the best investments we can make towards achieving global prosperity.

When we invest in girls, the dividends are immeasurable. Educated women earn higher wages and raise healthier and more educated children. Their voices are better heard in their communities. This results in stronger economies, more peaceful nations, and more equitable systems.

In closing, girls deserve every opportunity to reach their God-given potential. The time for action is now. As Congressional leaders, we urge you to act quickly to empower a generation of students by passing the Keeping Girls in School Act.

Sincerely,

Adventist Development and Relief Agency International

Christian Connections for International Health

World Vision