



August 20, 2020

The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott
The Honorable Lt. Governor Dan Patrick
The Honorable Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen

Delivered via email.

Re: Texas Prenatal to Three Collaborative on Proposed Budget Cuts

Dear Gov. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick, and Speaker Bonnen,

On behalf of the Texas Prenatal to Three Collaborative, we write to urge you not to implement several of the cuts proposed by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for the current biennium.

We are concerned that a number of the proposed cuts would undermine the early brain development of infants and toddlers. Brain science has made clear that these early childhood years are the foundation for the rest of children's lives. Cuts that shake that foundation will have consequences for these children, their communities, and the state for years to come. Additionally, considering the many challenges already facing Texas children and parents in the midst of the current public health crisis and employment crisis, we are particularly concerned about the timing of the proposed cuts.

Specifically, we ask you not to move forward with the proposed cuts to women's health services, Early Childhood Intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities, child care oversight, or the staff needed for timely enrollment of children and families in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, SNAP, and other programs.

We appreciate that you have exempted a number of programs for children and families from the cuts in the current biennium. Your decision to exempt them was a wise recognition that this is a particularly difficult time for cutting these services. However, we also encourage you to exempt the critical services cited above from any cuts during this biennium.

We understand that the state faces a significant and unpredictable revenue shortfall. To address the shortfall, while fully funding the services the children and families need during this difficult time, we encourage you to use the state's Economic Stabilization Fund, urge Congress to provide greater relief funding to states and explore other options for making additional revenue available during the next legislative session.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming months to ensure that infants and toddlers receive the support they need to thrive.

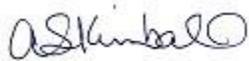
Sincerely,



Stephanie Rubin
CEO
Texans Care for Children



Sophie Phillips
CEO
TexProtects



Mandi Sheridan Kimball
Vice President
Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs
Children At Risk

CC:

The Honorable Jane Nelson
The Honorable Sarah Davis
The Honorable Giovanni Capriglione
Jerry McGinty, Director of the Legislative Budget Board
Trey Wood, HHSC Chief Financial Officer
Cecile Young, Executive Commissioner of Texas HHSC