



March 4, 2019

Dear Senator Warren,

We read about your recent remarks concerning the high financial toll of having children in the U.S. We agree that this is a problem. However, some have written that your plan would [“Get America To Have More Kids Again”](#). Given your deep understanding of the economics of inequality, we are asking you to include your [Universal Child Care and Early Learning](#) proposal as part of a smarter family planning platform.

You have previously stated that you are striving for “...an America where every kid, no matter what that kid’s zip code is, has that same fighting chance.” But the truth is, it *does* matter what [zip code a child is born into](#). If we want a country where the zip code in which you are born doesn’t matter, real family planning - as in “what is the plan” - has to be part of that picture. [There’s no way around it](#). Rich kids generally [stay rich](#). Poor kids generally stay poor. The conditions in which we enter the world, and our early childhood development, disproportionately determine our opportunities in life.

In [“Giving Kids a Fair Chance”](#), Nobel Prize Economist James Heckman argues, “the accident of birth is the greatest source of inequality in America today. Children born into disadvantage are, by the time they start kindergarten, already at risk of dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, crime, and a lifetime of low-wage work.”

- Being born into poverty [harms kids for life](#)
- The longer inequality is experienced, the harder it is to overcome.
- Unequal opportunities translate into [unequal lifelong outcomes by the time children reach the age of five](#).

Right now 41% of American children live in or near poverty. Inequality in the U.S. is so pervasive that the UN has called us “the most unequal society in the developed world.”

### **The push for higher fertility exacerbates inequality.**

The crossroads we face today of choosing higher or lower fertility rates has flushed out a variety of [moneyed interests](#). Worse yet, states are trying to pull parents back into the past with a [variety of pronatal incentives](#). These interests, public and private alike, benefit from a [Ponzi-scheme](#) pyramid – and are willing to arbitrarily push more and more children through the failing child welfare and other systems that we are desperately trying to improve. They are willing to accept the child abuse and neglect that will follow, the widening of the gap between rich and poor, and the exacerbation of climate change. They will do this all in order to create a pool of resentful future workers with lower education and fewer opportunities – a permanent

underclass whose only purpose is to [prop up](#) a system built on maximizing profits for the wealthy. It's wrong, and a violation of human rights, to use kids to fuel economic growth.

**There's no level playing field without a fair start in life.**

If we're not talking about fairness from birth, we are not addressing the disparities in cognitive, emotional and health development that are inflicted - the gap between young children who receive full attention from their parents and those who are missing critical early learning and social skills because their parents are working multiple jobs to get by.

**Family planning reduces inequality.**

The evidence is [clear](#). Parents who plan, [wait](#), and have [smaller families](#) are more financially secure and stable, parent better, and invest more in each child. The results pay off for kids in the form of greater academic achievement, emotional health, social mobility, health, community participation, gender equality, lifetime success, and more. [Research](#) indicates that better family planning is the [most effective way](#) to [end the cycle of poverty](#).

**How do we fix our broken system?**

History shows that fairer taxes and better jobs are not enough. All of that [must go hand-in-hand](#) with investments in children and family planning to enable every child to succeed throughout their development and into adulthood. Your universal child care and early learning proposal is a great start. Perhaps tie is to new parent education with information on the benefits of smaller families?

Another solution? Guaranteed Minimum Income tied to family planning. [Having Kids has proposed such a plan](#) to reduce inequality in D.C. Another approach is having great success in Colorado through the [LARC4CO](#) program, a partner of Having Kids. They offer affordable long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) to reduce unintended pregnancy and empower families to achieve greater stability before having kids. Investments like this at the federal level would be powerful tools in reducing economic inequality.

Better child care should be meant to help kids. To do that effectively, you have to aim to protect future kids, because we get the best results when we plan well ahead.

**Until we invest in better family planning to give all kids a fair start, we will be reacting downstream in the fight for equality. We implore you to start the conversation on better family planning policy.**

Sincerely,

Erika Mathews  
Executive Director  
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