

We, the undersigned, urge the 111th Congress and the Administration to enact an enduring foundation for lifelong saving and investment beginning with accounts for all children at birth.

Each year, four million children are born in the United States; forty percent, including a majority of children of color, are born into poverty. Lacking even a small amount of savings to invest in their future, these children's dreams of attending college, building a better life and realizing their full potential, fade almost from day one. Even those children not born into poverty are unlikely to have a savings account, receive meaningful financial education, save for their future or have parents save for them. How can we expect children who grow up without savings, financial capabilities, or the means to invest in their own futures, to become adults who save, work, learn, invest and shape their futures and ours?

For less than one percent of what the Federal government spends annually subsidizing the college educations, homes, retirement savings and businesses of the wealthiest 20% Americans, we could invest \$500 in a child savings account (CSAs) – in the financial futures of every newborn.

We know from rigorously evaluated demonstrations across the United States and child account policies in other countries that CSAs can build:

- Savings and saving behavior while reducing indebtedness;
- College expectations, attendance and completion; and
- Financial capability, connection and initiative.

Research and practice have shown that family ownership of even a few thousand dollars in assets can give children not only a measure of economic security, but also a transformative sense of possibility and hope for a brighter future.

The 111th Congress will consider bipartisan proposals to automatically enroll and extend a \$500 match to 50 million low and middle income families. We believe universal child savings accounts should be added as the foundation and front door of this expanded private retirement system. With this comprehensive infrastructure for a truly inclusive Save and Invest Economy beginning at birth, we will finally have the opportunity to realize Abraham Lincoln's dream that every child have "an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life."