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### **UNICEF USA, ChildFund and the Basic Education Coalition Host Joint Event to Support the Keeping Girls in School Act (H.R. 4314)**

*UNICEF Ambassador Sofia Carson, youth representatives and global NGO leaders come together to support H.R. 4314.*

**Washington, D.C. | September 22, 2022:** On Thursday, September 22, UNICEF, ChildFund International and the Basic Education Coalition, along with colleagues from World Vision, Plan International and others, hosted the event [“Keeping Girls in School: U.S. Foreign Policy for Global Prosperity”](#) on Capitol Hill, urging Congress to pass H.R. 4314 this legislative session.

The event was hosted by singer, actor, producer and UNICEF Ambassador Sofia Carson (*Purple Hearts*) and moderated by ChildFund’s VP for External Engagement and Partnership, Erin Kennedy, with remarks by Congresswoman Lois Frankel (D-FL), Congressman Michael Waltz (R-FL) and World Vision U.S. Senior Advisor for Education Alisa Phillips. The highlight of the program was the featured youth panelists, Tia El Tenn, 22, from Lebanon, and Victoria Bradley, 18, from Detroit, Michigan.

“There is no force more powerful than that of an educated woman,” said Sofia Carson. “As a UNICEF USA Ambassador, I have dedicated my voice to the protection and education of young women so that access to education is not a privilege but an inalienable right. It is our duty to protect girls in every corner of the world and ensure that the Keeping Girls in School Act is passed now. They are our future. And they need us, today.”

“When girls are educated, their futures are brighter and their communities are safer and more prosperous,” said Rep. Frankel. “There are millions of girls around the world living in war-torn and undeveloped countries who are struggling to get the education they need and deserve. The Keeping Girls in School Act will help tackle barriers to secondary education for young women across the globe.”

“It’s essential to global security that girls around the world have access to an education,” said Rep. Waltz. “I’ve seen time and time again that in societies where women thrive, extremism doesn’t. The United States must continue to support efforts to elevate women around the world.”

This event comes on the heels of the [UN Transforming Education Summit](#), which wrapped on Monday, with global commitments to education made, including by the U.S.: The Keeping Girls in School Act (H.R. 4314) passed the House in the 116th Congress, with over 100 bipartisan cosponsors. More than 50 diverse, faith-based, secular and international NGOs endorse the legislation.

Girls around the world face increasingly challenging barriers to education access, particularly those from low- and lower-income countries. There has been some progress toward gender equality in primary

education; however, the current gap around adolescent girls receiving a secondary education is immense. Nearly [130 million girls](#) worldwide are not enrolled in school, and COVID-19 has only exacerbated the crisis, with estimates that [11 million girls globally](#) may not return to school at all.

Barriers that prevent girls from achieving an education include a lack of safety at school, including harassment and other forms of physical, sexual or psychological violence; child, early or forced marriage; caregiving responsibilities and more.

The Keeping Girls in School Act would direct USAID to prioritize funding for adolescent girls to access secondary education in countries where they are more likely than boys to drop out of school. It would also help to improve safe, inclusive educational opportunities for girls by combatting the challenges they face in accessing and remaining enrolled in school, and it would require an updated U.S. global strategy on adolescent girls' empowerment.

When girls stay in school, everyone benefits. In fact, for every dollar spent on holistic programming to ensure that girls are educated, [there is a \\$2.80 return](#) – which means billions of dollars in extra GDP. Additionally, when girls stay in school, they live longer, are healthier and earn more income so they can support their families and broader communities. The Keeping Girls in School Act must be passed now.

UNICEF: [www.UNICEF.org](http://www.UNICEF.org)

ChildFund: [www.ChildFund.org](http://www.ChildFund.org)

Basic Education Coalition: [www.BasicEd.org](http://www.BasicEd.org)