



# Keep Kids Safe: During COVID-19 and Beyond

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JULY 23, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an existing silent pandemic of sexual violence against children and adolescents.

Many children and adolescents are now hidden from the caring adults, community members, and mandated reporters who could have protected them. Additionally, large numbers of children and adolescents are spending unprecedented time online, increasing exposure to online violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse.

Being at home and online isn't always safe.



# Building an Alliance between organizations / leaders / survivors



In response to the crisis, Together for Girls joined forces with CHILD USA, Darkness to Light, and the National Children's Alliance to create #KeepKidsSafe.

Led by a group of more than 70 adult survivors of child sexual abuse, leaders and national organizations, #KeepKidsSafe is united in a shared goal: **calling on Congress to take urgent action to protect children during COVID-19 and beyond.**



NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
ALLIANCE®



**Together  
for girls**  
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



**DARKNESS TO LIGHT®**  
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

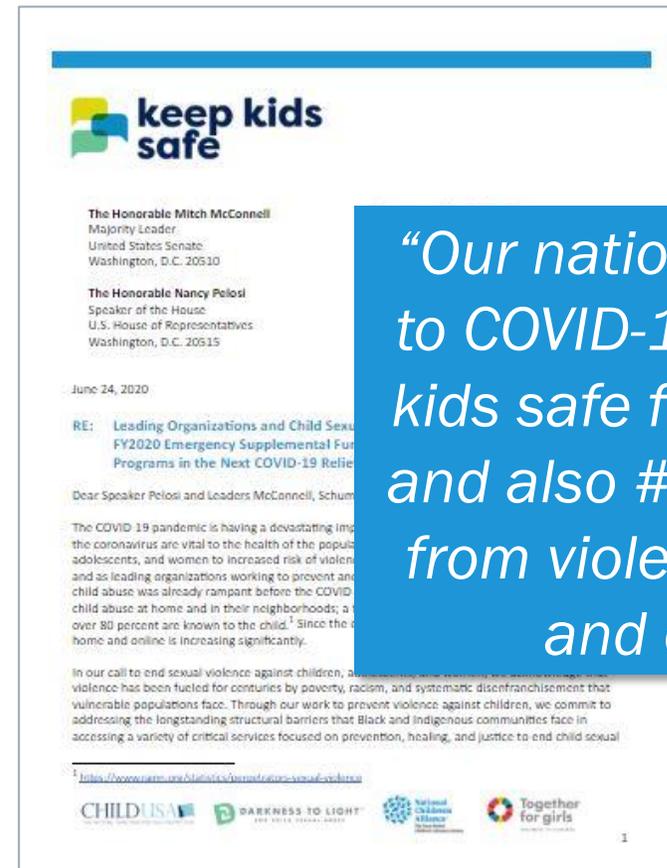
**CHILD USA**  
THE NATIONAL THINK TANK FOR CHILD PROTECTION

# Advocating to U.S. Congress

The #KeepKidsSafe open [letter](#) highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the risk of child abuse, and asks the U.S. Congress to include funding to prevent child abuse in the next COVID-19 relief package.

Currently the letter has more than **340 signatories** from a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including Save the Children, Prevent Child Abuse America, Promundo, Equality Now.

Importantly, many survivors and advocacy organizations signed on, such as RAINN, Beau Biden Foundation, Rise Up, SNAP Network, and The Army of Survivors.



*“Our national response to COVID-19 must keep kids safe from the virus and also #keepkidssafe from violence at home and online.”*

# Galvanizing Action

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To share information about #KeepKidsSafe and make it easy for all to get involved, we created an action hub, [keep-kids-safe.org](https://keep-kids-safe.org). On the site we provide four ways to help #KeepKidsSafe:

- 1 Sign the advocacy letter
- 2 Reach out to Congress
- 3 Spread the word & share your story on social media
- 4 Learn to prevent abuse with the Darkness to Light curriculum

Since the end of June, the site has received nearly **10,000** visitors.



We all



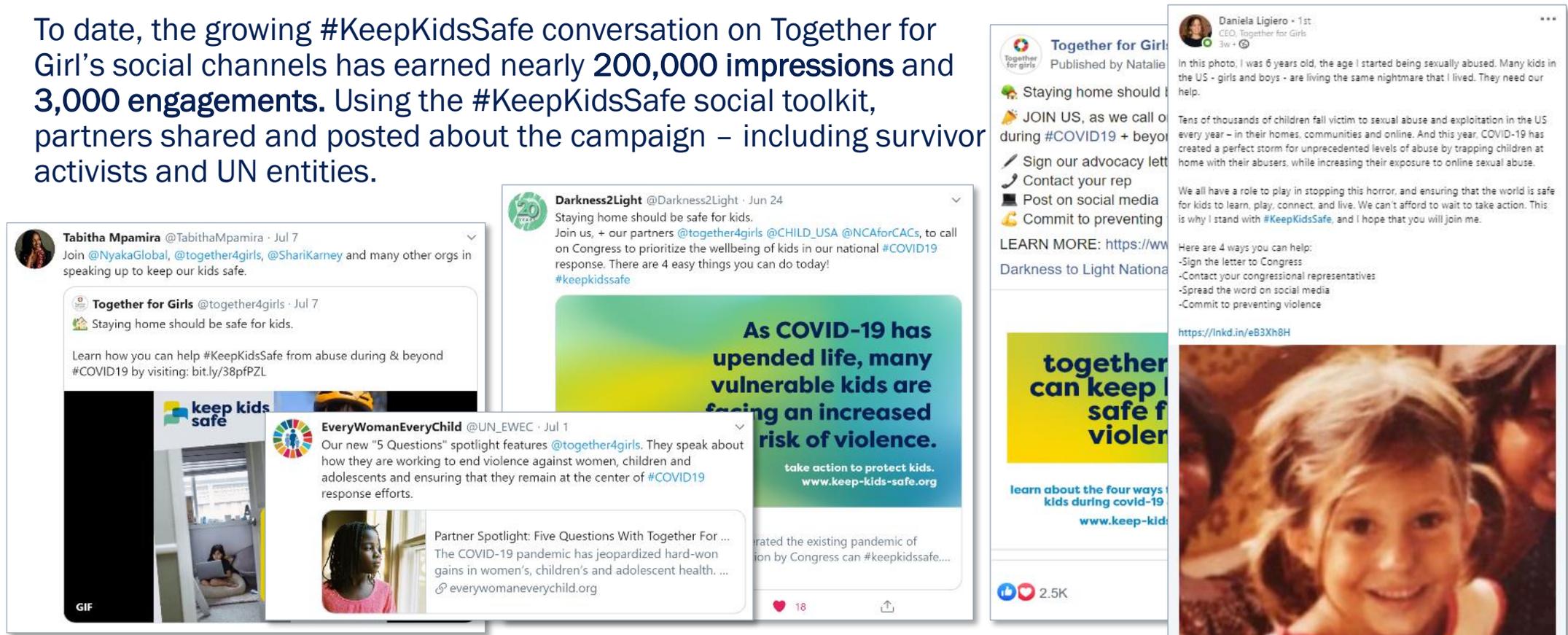
have a role



to play

# Sparking an Online Conversation

To date, the growing #KeepKidsSafe conversation on Together for Girl's social channels has earned nearly **200,000 impressions** and **3,000 engagements**. Using the #KeepKidsSafe social toolkit, partners shared and posted about the campaign – including survivor activists and UN entities.



The collage features several social media posts and graphics:

- Twitter Post (Tabitha Mpamira):** A tweet from @TabithaMpamira dated Jul 7, mentioning @NyakaGlobal, @together4girls, and @ShariKarney, with a link to a resource for staying safe during COVID-19.
- Twitter Post (Darkness2Light):** A tweet from @Darkness2Light dated Jun 24, discussing the safety of staying home for kids and providing a link to a toolkit.
- Twitter Post (EveryWomanEveryChild):** A tweet from @UN\_EWEC dated Jul 1, featuring a spotlight on @together4girls and their work on ending violence.
- Graphic:** A green and blue graphic with the text: "As COVID-19 has upended life, many vulnerable kids are facing an increased risk of violence. take action to protect kids. www.keep-kids-safe.org".
- Facebook Post (Together for Girls):** A post titled "Staying home should be safe for kids" with a call to action to join a campaign, sign advocacy letters, and contact representatives. It includes a link to learn more.
- Facebook Post (Daniela Ligiero):** A post from Daniela Ligiero, CEO of Together for Girls, dated 3 weeks ago, sharing her personal experience of sexual abuse at age 6 and calling for action to protect children during the pandemic.
- Graphic:** A yellow and green graphic with the text: "together can keep kids safe from violence. learn about the four ways to keep kids safe during covid-19 www.keep-kids-safe.org".
- Image:** A close-up photo of a young girl smiling.

# U.S. Congressional Advocacy Highlights

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#KeepKidsSafe informed the work of Representative Grace Meng (D-NY-6), who included [report language](#) accompanying the Fiscal Year 2021 Commerce, Science, Justice, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (p. 90) expressing the House Appropriation Committee’s support for:

- Comprehensive, victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to child sexual abuse prevention and response programs;
- Research on prevalence the impact of child sexual abuse, including its specific impact within communities of color; and,
- The prioritization of child-focused grant programs serving children and youth you have experienced complex trauma from experiences of child sexual abuse.

*“The Committee recognizes that child sexual abuse was already rampant before the COVID-19 pandemic; since the onset of the public health emergency, however, the risk of abuse in the home and online is increasing significantly.”*

# U.S. Congressional Advocacy Highlights (continued)

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#KeepKidsSafe work has also informed efforts by Representative Meng's office and Representative Ann Wagner's (R-MO-2) office to draft a bipartisan *Dear Colleague* letter addressed to Congressional leadership urging support for emergency funding to address child sexual abuse during COVID-19.

#KeepKidsSafe will continue to cultivate champions to engage on both current appropriations efforts around FY21 and a likely next **COVID relief bill in August 2020.**

# Advocacy Priorities June-December 2020

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1. Funding Keep Kids Safe (KKS) Programs via COVID-19 Emergency Funding Bills going through Congress
2. Increased Funding for KKS Programs in FY 21 Funding Billing going through Congress
3. Elevating KKS priorities to policymakers in preparation for the 117th Congress and the next Presidential cycle beginning in Jan 2021

# Looking ahead and next steps

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## **Mobilizing a coalition to raise awareness and drive change during COVID-19 and beyond**

- Strengthening the #KeepKidsSafe coalition and continuing to elevate survivor voices through op-eds and other digital communications
- Growing the online conversation and continuing to raise awareness on the issue of child abuse during COVID-19
- Identifying future opportunities for awareness-raising and education among policy and decision-makers.



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a serious crisis for underserved and vulnerable children.

We can and must make the world a safer place for every child.

Learn more at [keep-kids-safe.org](https://keep-kids-safe.org).

