



The Honorable Larry Hogan
 Chair, National Governors Association
 444 N. Capitol St. NW, Ste. 267,
 Washington, D.C. 20001

Via Email

May 6, 2020

Dear Governor Hogan:

The National Center for Victims of Crime (“NCVC”), the National Children’s Alliance (“NCA”), and the Child Welfare League of America (“CWLA”) are providing this letter to draw your attention to a second pandemic going unimpeded during the COVID-19 crisis: child abuse.

Historically, in times of national distress, incidents of child abuse increase. This is especially true when there are additional stressors on families, such anxiety about finances, health, or education. **As Dr. Nina Agrawal in her op-ed for the New York Times on April 7 emphasized: “The COVID-19 pandemic has created the conditions for a rise in child abuse that could go unchecked.” Despite this, at the state and local levels across the country, reports of child abuse and neglect are down anywhere from 40% to over 70% since the implementation of social distancing practices.** This is likely due to the fact that mandated reporters (especially teachers) no longer have face-to-face interaction with children. This is particularly terrifying since most K-12 schools are now shuttered through summer.

Education is the key. Governors can help curtail this issue in three very simple, yet crucial steps:

- Discuss child abuse frankly and openly in daily press briefings. Educate “essential workers,” who are not mandated reporters, regarding the signs of child abuse and educate them as to the resources available to report child abuse. We have attached a “1-pager” that can help guide governor’s communications with constituents.
- Provide resources and contacts for parents who are struggling on state websites.
- Run a publicity campaign through newspapers and TV ads. Encourage vigilance in both reporting and in parents accessing crucial resources.

We are grateful for your tremendous leadership efforts. The National Center for Victims of Crime, National Children’s Alliance, and the Child Welfare League remain resources for you and your staff regarding this specific issue or any issue that that crime victim service providers are facing both during this crisis and the long-term ramifications that we anticipate.

If you have any questions, or if you have specific concerns please do not hesitate to contact the NCVC executive director at Rwilliams@victimsofcrime.org or by phone at 202-467-8738.

With Gratitude,

Renee E. Williams
 Executive Director
 NCVC

Teresa Huizar
 Executive Director
 NCA

Christine James-Brown
 Executive Director
 CWLA

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