



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Children's Caucus Launches to Elevate Kids and Families in State Policy



(SACRAMENTO, CA – February 17, 2026) — Assemblymember Mia Bonta today formally launched the California Children's Caucus at the State Capitol, unveiling an inaugural class of more than 40 legislators committed to advancing child-centered and family-centered policy across California. Assemblymember Bonta will serve as Chair of the caucus, dedicated to improving outcomes for all children who call California home, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable.

The launch event brought together a broad coalition of state leaders and partners, featuring several legislative members, including Assemblymembers Corey Jackson, Darshana Patel, Josh Lowenthal, Diane Papan, Juan Alanis, Liz Ortega, LaShae Sharp-Collins, Pilar Schiavo, Rick Zbur, and Catherine Stefani, Senators Aisha Wahab, Susan Rubio, and other state lawmakers.

Community voices were central to the event. Representatives from California Promise Neighborhoods shared the ground-level challenges families face. A partner spotlight featured the End Child Poverty CA Coalition and Bright Futures Monterey County advocating for



CalKIDS, who spoke about the importance of early childhood investment, expanding college savings access to create opportunities, and strengthening legislative partnerships that benefit young children and families.

“Investing in children from the earliest years strengthens families, communities, and California’s future,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director of First 5 California. “The California Children’s Caucus represents an important step toward sustained, coordinated leadership that focuses on children in every major policy conversation.”

First 5 California is proud to have supported the launch of the California Children’s Caucus and to continue partnering with legislative leaders to advance policies that put children and families first. We thank Assemblymember Mia Bonta for inviting First 5 California to be part of this important milestone and for her leadership in bringing together lawmakers and community partners around a shared commitment to California’s youngest residents. As the state’s early childhood commission focused on children from prenatal through age five, First 5 California works alongside legislators, advocates, and community leaders to support healthy development, strong families, and positive outcomes for young children across California.

[The full video of the event is available here.](#)

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ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA

First 5 California was established in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which taxes tobacco products to fund services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 California programs and resources support parents, caregivers, and teachers in giving California’s children the best possible start in life. For more information, visit www.ccfc.ca.gov.