



For Immediate Release
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Marguerite Casey Foundation's Dr. Carmen Rojas Takes Helm as Children's Defense Fund Board Chair

*Former Vice Chair succeeds the Honorable Laphonza Butler
appointed to serve California as United States Senator*

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Washington, DC — Yesterday, October 4, 2023, Dr. Carmen Rojas ascended to the Chair of Children's Defense Fund's Board of Directors. Rojas accepted the role following the appointment of CDF's outgoing Board Chair, the Honorable Laphonza Butler, to the vacant United States Senate seat in California. Rojas previously served as Vice Chair of CDF's Board of Directors.

"It is a privilege to support an organization that has worked tirelessly for 50 years to ensure a level playing field for all children, and I am honored to become CDF's next Board Chair," Dr. Rojas said. "I have had the pleasure of working alongside Laphonza on the Children's Defense Fund Board of Directors for the past two years. Her commitment to ensuring people, across all backgrounds, have the ability to thrive in our country will be a powerful and necessary addition to our U.S. Senate. I know that Laphonza will be a strong force for the people of California and CDF's mission, and I look forward to continuing her strong stewardship of CDF's governance."

Dr. Rojas is the president & CEO of Marguerite Casey Foundation. Under her leadership, the foundation launched the prestigious Freedom Scholar award, committed to ensuring that a majority of MCF's endowment is overseen by diverse manager, and since starting in 2020 granted more than \$130M in funding to dozens of organizations doing the hard work of shifting power to those people who have long been excluded from having it. Prior to MCF, Dr. Rojas was the co-founder and CEO of The Workers Lab, an innovation lab that partners with workers to develop new ideas that help them succeed and flourish.

Senator Butler officially stepped down from her post as Chair of CDF's Board of Directors Wednesday after being sworn in for her duties in the United States Senate. In the transition, Butler joins a cadre of CDF Board Chairs called into national service, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, and the late U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, James Joseph. The senator said she has been honored to serve CDF for more than a decade.

"I have so deeply enjoyed my time working with Children's Defense Fund's board and leadership and was honored to carry forward such an amazing mantel entrusted to us by Marian Wright Edelman," stated Senator Butler. "I remain at the service of our shared mission to ensure America's youth are the most joyful in the world!"

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, President & CEO of Children's Defense Fund, says Butler's commitment to serving the nation's children and youth is profound. He added that he believes Dr. Rojas will further build upon her predecessor's efforts to help CDF strengthen its capacity and commitment to building community so young people grow up with dignity, hope, and joy.

“Senator Butler is deeply committed to supporting America’s children and families, and I know her powerful witness will continue in the United States Senate,” Dr. Wilson said. “While we are sad to lose the Senator on the board, we are excited to have her as a partner in the upper house and pleased at the stellar standard of leadership Dr. Rojas will continue as our new Chair. Her distinguished and progressive record in philanthropy and workers’ rights will continue to advance Children’s Defense Fund’s strategy and power-building for young people.”

In addition to her service with CDF, Dr. Rojas serves the boards of *Nonprofit Quarterly*, Blue Ridge Labs, the San Francisco Federal Reserve's Community Advisory Council, and Confluence's Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee. She earned a PhD in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley and was named a Fulbright Scholar in 2007.

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About Children’s Defense Fund

Celebrating 50 years in 2023, Children’s Defense Fund envisions a nation where marginalized children flourish, leaders prioritize their well-being, and communities wield the power to ensure they thrive. The only national, multi-issue advocacy organization working at the intersection of child well-being and racial justice, CDF advances the well-being of America’s most diverse generation, the 74 million children and youth under the age of 18 and 30 million young adults under the age of 25. CDF’s grassroots movements in marginalized communities build power for child-centered public policy, informed by racial equity and the lived experience of children and youth. Its renowned CDF Freedom Schools® program is conducted in nearly 100 cities across 30 states and territories. Learn more at www.childrensdefense.org.

Dr. Carmen Rojas:

