



October 5, 2016

Martha Raddatz
ABC News
1717 Desales St NW
Washington, DC 20036-4401

Anderson Cooper
CNN
1 Time Warner Ctr
New York, NY 10019-6038

Dear Anderson and Martha,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the 62 million users who turn to Common Sense for trusted information and resources on everything related to their kids. Our mission is to make kids our nation's top priority, and I am sure it will be no surprise to you that we've been extremely disappointed thus far with the appalling lack of attention kids have received throughout the 2016 presidential campaign.

You've seen the polls and surveys with reactions from parents, teachers, and kids around the country that validate this. For example, a recent Southern Poverty Law Center survey finds that more than two-thirds of teachers reported that students—mainly immigrants, children of immigrants, and Muslims—have expressed concerns or fears about what might happen to them or their families after the election.

Our kids have been exposed to bullying, insults, hateful language, fearmongering, and even discussions about private parts. Enough is enough.

Kids model adult behavior. Imagine a classroom where students acted like this year's presidential candidates. Children also absorb fears of adults around them, and fear has been ever-present in this campaign.

At the September 26 debate, we saw more of the same. Not only were kids hardly mentioned, but there was strong language about racism and sexism, yet no concern for the impact of these issues on kids. And once again, last night at the vice presidential debate, no questions were even asked about kids.

We believe that you can do better, and that is why we are writing you today.

We understand that ratings and headlines are important for media outlets. But for these debates, we believe the primary audience for the candidates should be families, including kids. The kids are watching—and it is important for our candidates to think about that every time they speak.

On October 9, let's talk about real issues that impact families and our kids. Not only that, let's force candidates to be respectful—not just toward each other but to the issues they are discussing, from immigration to foreign policy.

On behalf of parents and kids everywhere, we are asking you to do three things with the responsibility you have been given as the moderators of the second presidential debate:

- 1). Invite a group of kids to come watch the debate in person. Kids may not have a vote, but they deserve an opportunity to learn about how our democracy works and how the candidates feel about policies that will impact their future.
- 2). Make a statement at the start of the program that kids and families are watching and that the candidates' comments should reflect that. Interrupt the candidates when they make inappropriate remarks for an audience that includes kids.
- 3). Finally, ask specific questions about each candidate's message to children who are watching. For example, "What would you do in your first hundred days to ensure that our children have what they need to be successful and compete with their peers around the world? We know that the ages of 0 to 5 are critical to the development of our children and to their future success in school and career. What will you do to make sure families have what they need when kids are in early development stages?" Or, "What will you do to ensure every student has access to quality broadband so that all students have equal access to broadband and digital learning tools, no matter what their ZIP codes are?" Show kids that they matter and that our democracy is what makes America the greatest country in the world.

We know how much work you are putting into preparing for the debate. We are asking you to make kids a priority as you decide how the discussion with—and between—the candidates will go. The moderator role puts you both in a unique position to ensure kids are a part of these important discussions, and we challenge you to take every advantage of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Steyer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James P. Steyer
CEO and Founder, Common Sense Media