



PRESS RELEASE

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Legislators, Fiscal Watchdog, Children and Social Justice Advocates and Faith Leaders Urge NY to Take Real Steps To Address Child Poverty and Provide Tax Relief to Low-Income Families by Strengthening NY's EITC and Child Tax Credit

Lawmakers and advocates urge New York to act this year to address our child poverty epidemic. More than one in five NY children live in poverty; with that rate rising to nearly one in three among children of color. This means about **803,000 NY children** live in homes where food and heat are scarce, housing is unstable, and transportation is unreliable. Many cities throughout upstate New York have child poverty rates at or near fifty percent. This is a crisis that needs to be addressed. And yet this Executive Budget – like nearly every Executive and Enacted budget in the last decade – contains no bold investments in policies proven to reduce child and family and young adult poverty.

Another group that experiences poverty at high rates is young adults – ages 18 through 24. Twenty percent, or 326,000 young NY adults ages 18 through 24 live below the poverty level.

There is still time for NY to take real steps this year toward reducing child and young adult poverty by strengthening NY's refundable working family tax credits. A.1222 (Jaffee) would extend the state's child tax credit to include very young children, and A.1055 (Bronson), would extend the state's EITC to include young adults, and A. 3207 (Schimminger) would strengthen the state's EITC overall. Refundable tax credits are proven tools for reducing child and family poverty and moving families toward economic security. These bills should be included in the 2019-2020 Budget.

The human costs of child poverty are staggering. Experiencing poverty as a child – even for short stints – can impair brain development, physical and mental health, and academic achievement, and increase the possibility of child welfare involvement. And the impacts can last a lifetime. Childhood poverty is the single best predictor of adult poverty.

Child poverty also imposes extraordinary economic costs to the state. A report just issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine estimates that child poverty costs the nation \$800 billion to \$1.1 trillion annually in reduced adult productivity, increased costs of crime, and health expenditures associated with children growing up in poor families.

“As a mother and grandmother, I know first-hand how hard it is to raise children, particularly young children,” said **Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee**. *“I was shocked to learn that our state child tax credit – a credit created to help families cover the many costs associated with raising*

children – excludes babies and toddlers. I am proud to sponsor A.1222, which will expand New York’s child tax credit to include our youngest New Yorkers, and will double the credit for these young children. This bill will put more money in the pockets of hardworking families at a time when many families are struggling to make ends meet – when they are raising young children! I am also fully supportive of A.1055 (Bronson), which will pull even more New York families out of poverty by strengthening the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit. I will work tirelessly to have both of these bills included in the 2019-2020 budget – for the good of New York’s children.”

“Too many New Yorkers struggle with the burdens of living in poverty, and it is our obligation as legislators to advance policies that improve the lives of the families we represent. That is why I introduced legislation to extend the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to young adults 18-24 years old,” said **Assemblymember Harry Bronson**. “In the Rochester community specifically, we see the generational impact of poverty in a staggering number of residents, and this bill extends a helping hand for our young adults bringing us one step closer to ensuring they have an opportunity to succeed.”

“Time and again, we see how quickly day-to-day expenses and unexpected bills can add up, throwing a family’s monthly budget off track. The EITC can provide cash-strapped working families with much-needed support to help cover living expenses,” said **Assemblyman Robin Schimminger**. “The bill I am sponsoring (A3702) would increase the EITC to 35 percent in 2020. This will ease the burden on families with children and allow parents to keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets.”

“Over a million children and young adults, between the ages of 18-24, live below the poverty level in New York State. As the Chair of the Senate’s Children & Families Committee, I am committed to fight to end this epidemic. A good first step in addressing this issue is Assembly Member Jaffee’s bill A.1222 which would extend the state’s child tax credit to include very young children and Assembly Member Bronson’s bill A.1055 that would extend the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit to include young adults. I applaud the bill sponsors for their advocacy and will continue to fight to end the poverty epidemic. ”

– **Senator Velmanette Montgomery**

“Federal policies have made life financially difficult for all New Yorkers, especially those in the lowest income brackets. We need to assist our families that are struggling, especially those with children, by strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit in New York. We must protect the welfare of all of our residents.”

– **Assistant Assembly Speaker Félix W. Ortiz**

“Poverty plagues many families in New York and around the world,” said **Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez**. “A study by the National Center for Children in Poverty reports that about 15 million children in the United States live in families with incomes below the federal poverty line. Living in tough conditions often take a toll on a child’s mental and physical wellbeing. These two bills, A.1222 (Jaffee) and A.1055 (Bronson), take major strides in providing relief through tax credits to struggling families. I support my colleagues in these legislations and I am excited to see them move forward in the Assembly.”

“With childhood poverty being the single-biggest determinant of adult poverty, ensuring that our children have the resources they need to thrive is the wisest investment we can make. I applaud my colleagues, Assembly Members Bronson and Jaffee, for taking the lead on this critical issue, and let’s work together as a State to end childhood poverty here in New York once and for all.”

– **Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre**

“I would like to thank my colleagues and the advocates for joining me in pushing to strengthen the Empire State Child Credit and EITC,” said **Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner**. “Ensuring that families are able to obtain economic stability and security should always be one of our top priorities when discussing how to move New York forward and I am happy to add my voice to advocate for those who are the most vulnerable in our society.”

“It is unconscionable that so many children and young adults live in poverty in New York State, having to choose between basic necessities like school supplies and adequate food. New York State must do more to address poverty and strengthening effective programs like the Empire State Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit for youth will enhance the economic security of working families. I’m thankful to the bill sponsors and the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy for their leadership on this issue.”

– **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**

“I am proud to join my fellow colleagues to voice our stance and call for legislation that would reduce the child poverty rate. By strengthening New York’s Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, New York would provide an effective tool in reducing child and family poverty. Experiencing poverty as a child can cause serious damage to a child’s physical and mental health and development. Our children should be our top priority. By reducing the child poverty rate, we reduce their chances of remaining in poverty throughout adulthood. I urge the governor to finally include legislation that benefits our children in the Executive Budget.”

– **Assemblymember Joe DeStefano**

“Childhood poverty is a real problem in our state, and ignoring the issue will not make it go away. We need to take action. We need to help working families who are struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table and that starts with expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Empire State Child Credit. We have a responsibility to lift up our neighbors who need help, and allowing them to keep more of the money they rightfully earned will be a top priority of mine during this month’s budget negotiations.”

– **Assemblyman Karl Brabenec**

“As a new father with a six-month old baby at home and also as one of the youngest state legislators, I can attest firsthand how difficult it can be for families with two working parents. I strongly support efforts to strengthen both the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit here in New York to help working families keep more of their money to help support their children.”

– **Assemblymember Doug Smith**

“With the economy humming and unemployment at record lows, there is simply no excuse for child poverty that exceeds 20% overall, and nearly 30% among children of color. And most children in poverty have parents who are working. Failing to address this problem not only harms our children, it harms our economy. It is well established that investments now to reduce child poverty – like working family tax credits – have among the best returns on investment. We are grateful to Assemblymembers Jaffee, Bronson and Schimminger for legislation that strengthens New York’s child tax credit and EITC, representing an important step in what we hope will be an ongoing effort to end child poverty in New York. We strongly urge our leaders to include this legislation in this 2019-20 Budget; next year will be too late for many of our children.”

– **Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy**

“It’s time to provide tax relief to the people that need it the most – hard working, struggling low-income families. Expanding tax credits for low-income working families is a great way to help lift them out of poverty and help energize local communities. We continue to focus on tax cuts for the ‘middle class’ while ignoring the working poor in this state. We have an opportunity to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and Empire State Child Credit and we should take advantage of that by including it in the budget. We have been ignoring the needs of low-income families in this state for too long.”

– **Ron Deutsch, Executive Director of the Fiscal Policy Institute**

“Ending childhood poverty should be a top priority for policymakers in Albany and Washington, D.C. – and we know how to do it,” said **Larry Marx, CEO of The Children’s Agenda**. “More than half of children in our state’s third largest city, Rochester, NY, live in poverty. Similarly high child poverty rates are found in every corner of the state, from Jamestown to Watertown to the Bronx. This is simply unacceptable. The Empire State Child Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit are two of the most effective tools we have to reduce poverty and support low-income families. The Children’s Agenda applauds Assemblywoman Jaffee for proposing to extend the child tax credit to include very young children and Assemblyman Bronson for proposing to extend the EITC to young adults just transitioning into the workforce. We urge other legislators and the Governor to act this year by adopting these bills in the 2019-20 state budget.”

“In the face of horrible child and youth poverty rates in New York, it is really terrible that our lawmakers continues to give such low priority to young people who need our help to survive and thrive. The neglect is an old story. In the Gospels, we learn that the people were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might care for them. Unfortunately, the disciples spoke sternly to the children and pushed them away. The disciple’s neglect, however, angered Jesus who said to these disciples: ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.’ Jesus stood up to the disciples and cared for the kids. As the New York State Council of Churches, we wish to pose this question to our lawmakers: Will you act like the disciples or will you finally give children your highest priority?”

– **The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director, New York State Council of Churches**

"In New York City alone, more than 1 in 4 children are living in poverty, which is why it's critical that we are doing everything possible to provide youth and families with the long-term economic stability they need. The earned income tax credit and child care tax credit in New York have been critical in helping lift families out of poverty. We applaud Assembly Member Jaffee and Assembly Member Bronson for championing two critical pieces of legislation that would expand both the State's Earned Income Tax Credit to include young adults ages 18-25 and the Empire State Child Credit to include infants and toddlers."

– Jennifer March, Executive Director, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

"In Westchester County, one of the most expensive counties in the nation, over 26% of children and young adults live in low-income households earning under \$49,000. The United Way ALICE Report suggest \$77,892 is needed for a family of four's household survival –enough for housing, child care, health care, and taxes. Anything we can do to help families especially the Earned Income Tax Credit and Empire State Child Credit should be a no brainer. If we as a State care about giving kids a good start these bills should be adopted in the 2019-20 budget."

– Allison Lake, Executive Director, Westchester Children's Association

"New York State needs proper tax policies to give those families in need the means to better afford quality child care, to know their children are safe, nurtured, and educated while at work, attending school, or attending vocational training. The high cost of child care in New York can cost upwards of \$14,000 a year – twice as much as a year of SUNY college tuition. These proposed changes will help relieve families of this financial burden."

– Vicki Caramante, Executive Director, Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.

"Our partners in the Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance know all too well that poverty casts a long shadow on a person's life and that the early years are most critical. Improvements to child tax credits related to daycare for young children will help alleviate a tremendous financial burden for parents."

– Cali Brooks, President and CEO, Adirondack Foundation

"Generational poverty is one of the largest contributing factors to financial insecurity in America. By increasing the EITC and expanding the credit to include both children and young adults, we take crucial steps towards building familial wealth and correcting this pervasive problem for generations to come."

– Chief Program Office Haidee Cabosura, The Financial Clinic

"Child poverty in New York State is at appalling levels, and the lack of urgency lawmakers have shown so far is shameful. Expanding the EITC and Empire State Child Credit are not solutions to the crisis, but they would make a difference for thousands of families. There is no excuse not to take this minimal but meaningful step this year."

– Rev. Emily McNeill, Executive Director, Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State

“Children growing up in poverty deserve a chance. Enhanced tax credits that help struggling families provide a strong foundation for our state’s children to grow and thrive make sense for their well-being, future success and the economy.”

– **Meredith Chimento, Executive Director, Early Care and Learning Council**

“It is well documented that NY has a high rate of poverty among children and young adults. The study commissioned by United Way of New York State on ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) shows that more than 50% of New Yorkers can not afford a basic household survival budget. The report further illustrates a dramatic decline in heads of household under the age of 25 in NY. Enhancing and expanding the Empire State Child Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit is an important way to reduce poverty and ALICE, while strengthening the financial stability of the working class and giving a strong start to our youngest residents.”

– **Brenda Episcopo, President & CEO, United Way of New York State**

“Poverty contributes to toxic stress in children, which has a detrimental effect on their health and well-being. Both of these proposed bills would help alleviate some of that stress and strengthen families. NYS should do all it can to support the most vulnerable.”

– **Tim Hathaway, PCANY**

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