



February 18, 2021

Dear Legislator:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a surge in New York children experiencing poverty. If not addressed now, New York children, families, and communities will carry the scars of poverty with them for a lifetime.

The undersigned organizations – all powerful advocates for child and family well-being – urge you to ensure child poverty is on your priority list for the budget and as the state tackles recovery. To achieve that goal, we urge you to become a co-sponsor of the Child Poverty Reduction Act S.2755-A (Ramos)/A.1160 (Bronson) and ensure it is included in the budget bills. This legislation would have New York publicly commit to cutting child poverty in half in ten years, with attention to racial equity, and require a plan to reach this goal and regular assessment of progress toward the goal. It would expect leaders to act with intention, in good fiscal times, and challenging ones, to shield our children from far-reaching and long-lasting harms poverty causes.

Among our organizations’ top priorities this year – and every year – is to tackle child poverty because it poses such a grave threat to the overall well-being of the hundreds of thousands of New York children who experience it each year.

We strongly support the **Child Poverty Reduction Act S.2755-A (Ramos)/A.1160 (Bronson)** because New York has for too long allowed hundreds of thousands of children endure the hardships of poverty – in times of recession, and in times of plenty. New York entered the pandemic with more than 700,000 children living in poverty, representing 18% of all New York children, with that percentage a full 10 points higher for Black children, and 7 for Latino children. Compared to the rest of the nation, NY children were more likely to live in poverty than children in 32 other states. And these rates do not include the hundreds of thousands of children and families pushed into poverty and near poverty since the pandemic struck. The child poverty rate in New York is undoubtedly much higher now.

For our children experiencing poverty, every day New York fails to prioritize ending child poverty matters. The experience of poverty and trauma in childhood can have long-lasting impacts on development. The stress of poverty can alter the brain development of young children – causing permanent changes in the structure and functioning of the brain. As a result, many children who experience poverty face significant challenges – in the form of poor health, academic obstacles, lower earnings – for the rest of their lives. This has a detrimental impact on children, but also on the future viability of communities. Reactive interventions in the out-years

through the provision of public benefits or interaction with the criminal justice system are far more costly than meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and families from the beginning. With the stakes so high, there should be no delay in tackling child poverty, no matter the fiscal challenges facing the state.

S.2755-A/A.1160 provides New York the tools needed to reduce child poverty. It requires New York to make a public commitment to cutting child poverty in half in ten years; requires an annual public report of the effects any adjustment or reduction by the director of the budget will have on child poverty; establishes the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to develop a plan to achieve this goal; requires regular reporting to hold government to account; and directs the Advisory Council to evaluate policies proven to sharply cut child poverty including:

- Strengthening and expanding New York's Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Expanding and strengthening New York's child tax credit;
- Expanding work training and employment programs;
- Increasing access to subsidized housing vouchers; and
- Expanding access to subsidized child care.

We respectfully urge passage of **S.2755-A/A.1160** this legislative session to enable New York to turn the tide on child poverty once and for all.

Warm Regards,

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Children's Defense Fund-New York

Citizens' Committee for Children of NY (CCC)

NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Prevent Child Abuse NY

Robin Hood

The Children's Agenda

The Education Trust-New York

Westchester Children's Association