

May 26, 2021

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
907 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Assemblymember Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

We write to respectfully request your support in passing the Child Poverty Reduction Act, S.2755-B/ A.1160-B, that 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. This legislation would require our State leaders to act with intention, in good fiscal times and challenging ones, to shield our children from the far-reaching and long-lasting harms poverty can cause.

For too long, New York has allowed hundreds of thousands of children to 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, New York 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 the coming year, New York has real support from the federal government to turn the tide on child poverty, via the American Rescue Plan, arguably the most consequential investment in the nation's children in a generation. Yet the American Rescue Plan will not lift all New York children out of poverty, it leaves out tens of thousands of immigrant children, and it is temporary.

For our children, 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 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-B/A.1160-B 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 that 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 especially to include young children;
- 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-B/A.1160-B** immediately to enable New York to begin turning the tide on child poverty once and for all.

Sincerely,

1199SEIU UHWE

Action for a Better Community
 Alliance for Quality Education
 Alliance of New York State YMCAs
 Astor Services for Children & Families
 Bivona Child Advocacy Center
 Child Care Council of Westchester
 Children’s Defense Fund-New York
 Citizen Action of New York
 Citizens’ Committee for Children of NY (CCC)
 City of Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau
 Community Health Care Association of NYS
 Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA)
 Docs for Tots
 Early Care and Learning Council
 ECE on the Move
 Educators for Excellence – New York
 Empire Justice Center
 Family Ties of Westchester, Inc.
 Foodlink
 Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
 Hobart and William Smith Colleges
 Hope For Youth
 Hope’s Door
 League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County
 Medicaid Matters New York
 Mental Health Association of Westchester
 Mount Vernon United Tenants
 Neighbors Link

New York Immigration Coalition
New York State Council of Churches
Nonprofit Westchester
NYPALC - New York Portuguese American Leadership Conference
NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3
NYS Community Action Association
NYS Network for Youth Success
Open Door Family Medical Center
Poppy Muse Inc.
Prevent Child Abuse NY
Program Design and Development, LLC
Robin Hood
Rochester Area Community Foundation
Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
The Children's Agenda
The Education Trust-New York
United Way of Greater Rochester
United Way of the Greater Capital Region
United Way of Westchester and Putnam
University of Rochester
Westchester Children's Association
Westchester Institute for Human Development
Westchester Library System
White Plains Youth Bureau
Yonkers Coalition for Youth
YWCAs of NYS

cc: Senator Jessica Ramos
Assemblymember Harry Bronson