

Memorandum in Support

S.2755-A/A.1160-A

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges swift passage of the Child Poverty Reduction Act 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 New York 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.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy strongly supports the **Child Poverty Reduction Act S.2755-A (Ramos)/A.1160-A (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, 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 Act, 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 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-A 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 urge passage of **S.2755-A/A.1160-A** immediately to enable New York to begin turning the tide on child poverty once and for all.

May 14, 2021