

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S.1210 / A.2872

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges the Senate and Assembly to pass legislation to subsidize diaper costs for low-income families in the form of a diaper allowance to keep babies healthy and strengthen low-income families.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy is a 150-year-old statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to policy analysis and advocacy in support of public systems that meet the needs of disenfranchised populations and people living in poverty. Schuyler Center supports S.1210 / A.2872 to amend Social Services Law to provide diaper allowances to strengthen low-income families.

In the first few years of a child's life, their diaper needs to be changed six to twelve times a day in order for the child to stay clean, dry, and healthy.¹ With diapers costing an average of 9 dollars for a pack of 28, families struggling to make ends meet often have to make the impossible choice between paying rent, transportation or food, and buying diapers for their young children.^{2,3} A nationwide study found that the average household in need of diapers – 36 percent of households – falls 19 diapers short each month.⁴ This means that families with young children are often going without diapers or trying to stretch diapers for their children until their next paycheck arrives, causing family stress and increasing the risk of diaper rash. Insufficient diapers can also lead to a child being barred from child care and other early education programs which routinely require families to provide diapers for their children. Barring a child from child care can have lasting effects on the economic security of the parents and the child, and deprive the child of early learning opportunities that can be critical to school readiness and overall child well-being.

S.1210 / A.2872 would amend the law to create an allowance for low-income parents to receive up to eighty dollars every 3 months for diapers for a child up to two years old. For many families, a diaper allowance will save them from having to choose between keeping their baby healthy and comfortable, and falling deeper into economic insecurity or poverty.

By passing this piece of legislation, New York has the opportunity to provide a much-needed support to our families with young children, to better enable these families, and our youngest New Yorkers, to thrive.

April 4, 2023

¹ National Diaper Bank Network. n.d. What is Diaper Need?

<https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/diaper-need/>

² Fox 11 News. September 25, 2019. United Way Fox Cities teams up with local company to provide diapers for 900 babies. <https://fox11online.com/news/local/united-way-fox-cities-teams-up-with-local-company-to-provide-diapers-for-900-babies>

³ The Nation. August 22, 2018. Welcome to America, Where Parents Can't Afford Diapers.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/welcome-to-america-where-parents-cant-afford-diapers/>

⁴ Huggies. n.d. Diaper Need and Its Impact on U.S. Families.
<https://www.huggies.com/~media/files/kc/huggies/why-huggies/diaper-need-and-its-impact-on-us-families.pdf>