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Rally to End Child Poverty Brings Hundreds to the NYS Capitol

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[Photos and videos/b-roll available here](#), with additional footage to be added by 10am 11/20.

ALBANY, N.Y. (Nov. 19, 2024) – Over 200 advocates from across New York State gathered outside the State Capitol building today, rallying in support of New York State’s child poverty reduction goals and actions.

New York children are more likely to live in poverty than in [32 other states](#), with 18% (nearly one in five) experiencing poverty in 2023. The rate is even higher for children of color.

Spearheaded by the [New York Can End Child Poverty](#) campaign, the large group included parents, legislators, educators, pediatricians, nurses, child care providers, economists, youth leaders, labor unions, faith leaders, and more.

Buses from Rochester, Syracuse, NYC, and Westchester traveled to Albany, bringing New Yorkers who believe that New York Can – and must – End Child Poverty. The coalition has been leading the way in ensuring that the state follows through on its nation-leading goal of reducing child poverty by 50% by 2032.

The campaign is supporting Governor Hochul and state leaders in making meaningful and immediate budget investments in policies proven to reduce child poverty. Those policies include a robust child tax credit, accessible and meaningful public assistance, and housing vouchers.

At a time when many families struggle to make ends meet, and a time of shifting Federal priorities, New York State must be a leader in uplifting families and making New York the best place to raise a family.

The rally followed a meeting of the [Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council](#) (CPRAC), which will vote in December on public policy recommendations to help the state meet its child poverty reduction goal by 2032. The broad coalition looks forward to CPRAC’s December vote and to the forthcoming state budget.

Background: New York’s Commitment to New York’s Children

In 2021/2022, the New York State Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, the [Child Poverty Reduction Act](#), committing the State to reduce child poverty by 50% over 11 years, with attention to

racial equity. **The nation-leading law had nearly unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate and Assembly.**

When Governor Hochul signed the Act into law, New York became a leader in creating a measurable goal toward ending child poverty. New York's leaders made it clear that our state will no longer tolerate having two in five children experiencing severe economic hardship.

Among other provisions, the Act established the [Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council](#), chaired by the Executive Chamber (Office of the Governor) and the Commissioner of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Appointed Council members include NYS agency leaders, advocates, impacted community members, heads of county social services departments, and others working to end and mitigate child poverty in New York State

The Council is charged with establishing a timeline, inclusive of yearly benchmarks, for reducing child poverty in the state by 50% by 2033 and developing evidence-based reports and recommendations. Additionally, the Council must consider the disproportionate impact poverty has on various racial and ethnic communities and what policies may assist in alleviating such disparities.

About New York Can End Child Poverty

The New York Can End Child Poverty campaign is composed of individuals and organizations from across New York State who are working to improve long-term outcomes for children and families from households experiencing economic hardship. We are dedicated to advancing public policies that support children and families while reducing child poverty and inequity. Learn more at www.newyorkcan.org.

Quotes

State Legislators

"As Chairwoman of the New York State Assembly Social Services Committee, I believe it is our moral and legal obligation to end childhood poverty. When our children face hunger, instability, and lack of opportunity, it impacts the entire community—today and for generations to come. We must commit to ensuring every child has the resources they need to thrive: adequate cash assistance, nutritious meals, quality education, and safe and affordable housing. By taking action now, we can break the cycle of poverty and build a future where every child has a fair chance to succeed," **said Assemblymember Maritza Davila.**

"Poverty is a policy choice and it's imperative that we make better choices. I thank the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council for their work on this report and subsequent recommendations, including tax credits, which we will look to advance in this year's budget," **said Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Children and Families Committee**

"As one of 12 children from a rural NY community, I have firsthand experience of child poverty. Today, we better understand that the detrimental effects of living in poverty can last years, if not a lifetime, especially for children who are raised in these circumstances. But fortunately, we also know there are policies we can affect to help lift those families up and into a brighter future. Under

my bill, The Child Poverty Reduction Act, which was signed into law in 2022, we pledged to decrease child poverty by 50% in 10 years. And today we must put into action strategies to help us accomplish this goal such as expanding benefits for nutrition, childcare and healthcare and increasing access to affordable, stable safe housing, among other things,” said **Assemblymember Harry B. Bronson, sponsor of the Child Poverty Reduction Act bill.**

“Every single child deserves the opportunity to grow up in a safe, stable, and welcoming environment, and as adults, we must strive to make the community we leave behind better for future generations. I am committed to advocating for our children and I will continue to push for legislation, funding, and resources that will help reduce child poverty across New York State,” said **Assemblymember Demond Meeks.**

Senator Jeremy Cooney said, “Combating child poverty across our state requires a holistic approach, from supporting child tax credits to providing affordable housing. I’m proud to stand with our partners statewide to fight child poverty and I will always support initiatives that set our youth up for success.”

Organizations

“Poverty is not inevitable. It is a policy choice. No child should have to worry where their next meal will come from or where they will sleep at night in one of the wealthiest and most prosperous states in our nation,” said **NYSUT President Melinda Person.**

“Poverty impedes the healthy development and well-being of children. Approximately one out of every five children in New York State lives in poverty with Black, Brown, and other marginalized children suffering the highest rates. The Governor and legislature must do what’s right on behalf of children: implement policies and programs to abolish child poverty. We know better. It’s time to do better,” said **Yomika S. Bennett, President & CEO Black Child Development Institute – New York State**

“We are proud to join advocates, practitioners, and legislators in support of a suite of policy proposals to finally end child poverty in New York. With New York getting more unaffordable by the day, investing in our state’s children and families will help build a stronger, more prosperous future for us all. As the largest unconditional cash transfer program for mothers and infants in the country, we forward to continued partnership to reduce the high cost of living, eliminate childhood poverty, and improve material conditions for low-income families all across New York State,” said **Holly Fogle, Founder & President of The Bridge Project.**

“Child poverty is a policy choice made by our leaders and it is wrong. I stand with all the young people who are tired of the choices made about us without us, and allies from across New York who are in Albany today to say it is time to end child poverty in New York State. That means we need Governor Hochul and our Legislative Leaders to listen to the CPRAC recommendations and move ahead with those ideas. But, we need to be even bolder – reducing child poverty by 50% isn’t enough. We need to do more. That should include unconditional cash support for families and for young adults emerging from poverty,” said **Amal Kharoufi, Advocate and Leader from YouthNPower: Transforming Care at Children’s Defense Fund-NY.**

"New York took a step in the right direction by committing to reduce NYS child poverty significantly over the next decade — now it is time to take action to make that commitment a reality. The Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council has identified essential solutions for reducing child poverty, including supporting enhanced refundable tax credits, an inclusive housing voucher, public benefits enhancements, and food supports. It has never been more important for New York to be a leader of child poverty reduction nationwide, and we look forward to continuing to partner with the Governor, the State Legislature, and advocacy partners to combat child poverty," **said Juan Diaz, Policy Associate at Citizens' Committee for Children.**

"Over 1.5 million children across the state of New York are growing up in low-income families and are being denied a fair opportunity at reaching their full potential", **said David R. Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York**, a non-profit that has been working to improve lives of New Yorkers for 180 years. "We can alleviate their hardships by expanding the Empire State Child Tax Credit, by increasing the cash assistance amounts to reflect current levels of economic need, or by passing the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) in this year's budget. Not only would passing these policies help cut child poverty, but more importantly, it would help millions of working New Yorkers feel that their struggles are not unseen by the powers in Albany."

"New York has the tools and means to cut child poverty in half. To achieve this goal, we must move forward by implementing an enhanced child tax credit, investing in prevention, and supporting programs that strengthen families—especially those who are most marginalized. We must invest in the long-term sustainability of the child care workforce, expand universally-offered home visiting, and improve early literacy through increased investments in professional development and by getting books and resources into homes across the State," **said Jenn O'Connor, Director of Partnerships and Early Childhood Policy for EdTrust-New York.**

"We see on the ground that children are suffering and families are increasingly frustrated by of New York state's outdated antipoverty policies. We are grateful to the Child Poverty Advisory Council for laying out a path for New York to make much-needed progress, including long-overdue increases in public benefits, housing, food support, and tax amendments. Now is the exact right time for Governor Hochul to make bold investments in the support needed by New Yorkers with lower earnings," **said Kristin Brown, President and CEO of Empire Justice Center.**

"Child care is a key component to eradicating child poverty. It gives parents the ability to pursue employment opportunities that lift their families up. It provides children with a strong beginning to their education that can be built on for later success. And when we pay early childhood educators the thriving wages they deserve as professionals, we lift some of the lowest paid workers in New York out of poverty. Now is the time for New York State to invest in children, families, and the workforce and eradicate child poverty", **said Shoshana Hershkowitz, Campaign Manager for the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.**

"As a statewide network of families and young people navigating mental health, child welfare and other social service systems, we know that when parents struggle, their children struggle. To address the wellbeing of families, we must address the economic conditions in which families raise their children. In a wealthy state like New York, this isn't just possible, it's necessary. Thanks to the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, state leaders have a path forward. New York must

answer our call by championing sweeping policy recommendations to reduce child poverty in this upcoming state budget,” **said Paige Pierce, CEO, Families Together in New York State.**

“No child in New York should be growing up in poverty in the year 2024. Our association, which consists of the 10 Feeding America food banks in New York and a network of over 3,000 community-based partners, is proud to support proven initiatives to eradicate child poverty. Through expanding the state's child tax credit, creating a statewide rental assistance program, and expanding food assistance to excluded New Yorkers, our state can play a leadership role in addressing the intersecting issues of hunger and poverty. We look forward to supporting these initiatives and turning CPRAC's recommendations into policy change,” **said Dan Egan, Executive Director of Feeding New York State**

“Children deserve to live with dignity and economic security, having what they need to learn, grow, and thrive. But across our state, families are struggling to keep up with the cost of living, unable to afford even the basics like housing, food, and child care. We cannot continue to tolerate such widespread deprivation and inequality in our state. The recommendations identified by the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council—which include increasing cash assistance and an expansion of food assistance, housing assistance, and tax credits—provide much overdue relief to those made most vulnerable. While we continue to work toward structural changes that target the root of this economic deprivation, we urge the Governor to begin the process by committing to making these recommendations a reality,” **said Joseph Jones, Director of Policy, Advocacy, & Research at FPWA**

“New York has the chance to be a trailblazer in fighting child poverty,” **said Andres Vives, CEO of Hunger Solutions New York.** “Nearly 1 in 5 children in New York struggle with food insecurity, which is inextricably linked to poverty. The New York State Child Poverty Reduction Act committed our state to cutting child poverty in half by 2032. It is our hope that at next month’s meeting, the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council accepts the recommendations they reviewed today. From there, we urge lawmakers to implement and fund these critical policies. New York can and must take action now to mitigate poverty and support food security for all children.”

"No child should be living in poverty in a state as wealthy as New York. The work of the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council has affirmed that we know how to end child poverty, and we have the resources to do so. Now it's up to our elected officials to implement these policy solutions, and it's up to all of us to hold them accountable to doing so," **said Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Executive Director, Kairos Center and national co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.**

“New York has a moral obligation to follow through on its commitment to slash child poverty. Thanks to the work of the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, we now have a roadmap to accomplish this. Gov. Hochul and the legislature must take immediate action on these recommendations. Especially as the incoming federal administration signals its intention to cut safety net programs, New York must move proactively in the opposite direction in order stay on track to cut child poverty in half by 2031,” **said Rev. West McNeill, executive director, Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS.**

“New Yorkers – especially low-income New Yorkers – must remain strong in the face of challenges ahead. Now is the perfect time for the Governor to heed our call for meaningful change. New York State cannot afford the shameful reality that so many of its children grow up in poverty. Increasing Cash Assistance to meet basic needs, adopting a State Section 8 program to keep rents affordable, increasing child tax credits to reach more families, and providing food benefits for immigrant households excluded from SNAP will reduce child poverty in New York State dramatically. Enhanced economic stability is more than a safety net, it’s a springboard to stronger communities that can withstand challenges, whether caused by the economy, natural disasters, or unexpected hardships. We look forward to seeing these changes become law,” **said Adriene Holder, Chief Attorney, Civil Practice, The Legal Aid Society.**

Becca Telzak, Deputy Director of Make the Road New York, said, “As one of the richest states in our country, it is inexcusable and immoral to have our people, including our children, suffer in poverty. At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet- put food on the table and a roof over their heads- our state legislative leaders need to strengthen our safety net programs and support New Yorkers to be able to stay and thrive in our state. This upcoming legislative session, to be able to begin to address the housing instability and food insecurity our people are facing, we must work to pass the Housing Access Voucher Program and expand SNAP benefits, for all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.”

“It is unconscionable that nearly one in five children in New York are living in poverty, and even more alarming that almost half of those are in deep poverty, struggling to survive on less than \$14,000 a year for a family of four. These are children who are falling through the cracks of our state’s social safety net. While child poverty decreases across the nation, New York is lagging behind, with one of the worst rates in the country. Our children deserve better, and it’s time for New York to act with urgency to address this crisis before it defines another generation. This is a call to action for our state leaders to prioritize the needs of our most vulnerable children and families. The National Parents Union urges the Senate to act to expand the Child Tax Credit and for the passage of two proposed bills in New York to help reduce the number of children in poverty in the state,” **said Ashara Baker, National Parents Union New York State Director.**

“New York families have struggled enough to make ends meet under policy conditions that put basic needs out of reach. Clear remedies are at hand that can vault our families and our state to stability and prosperity. Now is the time for the Governor and Legislature to act. We can protect childhood, support mobility and all enjoy a healthy economy with bold action from our state leaders,” said **Nora McCarthy, Director, NYC Family Policy Project.**

“Primary prevention focuses on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to abuse. Families experiencing poverty face pressures and challenges that increase stress and in turn increase the risk of child abuse. By reducing child poverty, New York can make a significant difference in creating a safer, more stable environment for both children and parents, helping to prevent abuse before it happens, and ultimately leading to stronger, healthier families,” **said Tamaé Memole, Managing Director, Primary Prevention, Prevention Child Abuse New York.**

“Hunger, and the effects of hunger on health and school performance, impacts far too many children in New York State. 12.3% of households across our State are struggling to put food on the table, according to the 2023 USDA report. Nationally, 17.9% of households with children, and

households with children headed by a single female (34.7%) or single male (22.6%), are living with food insecurity. This is a significant issue that can be alleviated through anti-poverty and anti-hunger programs - they work! Let's lead the way by investing in programs that work to end child poverty in New York State!" **said Natasha Pernicka, Executive Director, The Alliance for a Hunger Free NY.**

"Now is the time for our state to take bold action to alleviate the plague of child poverty and enable upward mobility for families across New York. While child poverty in Rochester and across the state is on the decline, the number of children still in poverty remains unconscionably high. Every year children spend in poverty is dangerous and expensive. The toxic stress of early poverty stunts children's development, leading to opportunity gaps that can last a lifetime and create perpetual impact on our local and state economies. Poor children are more likely to have poor academic achievement, drop out of high school and later become unemployed, experience economic hardship and be involved in the criminal justice system. Children who experience poverty are also more likely to be poor at age 30 than children who never experience poverty.

We strongly encourage the state to follow through on its promise to its residents and take actions that will achieve our goal of reducing child poverty by 50% in 10 years. Our children, and all families across the state, deserve no less," **said Aqua Porter, Executive Director, Rochester-Monroe Anti Poverty Initiative (RMAPI).**

"In a state as wealthy as New York, it's outrageous that anyone should struggle in poverty, let alone children. Through our emergency food programs, my community does our best to meet people's needs, but we know it's not enough. We need elected leaders to take bold action to make sure every child has access to healthy food and quality, affordable housing," **said Rev. Dustin Longmire, Messiah Lutheran Church, Rotterdam Community Center.**

"Allowing children to live in poverty is a policy choice and in New York, child poverty is persistently higher than in other states. Childhood is fleeting; the policy and budget choices our leaders make in 2025 will affect children for their lifetimes. With the Child Poverty Reduction Act, New York's leaders made a statutory commitment to cutting child poverty in half in the next decade, with attention to racial inequity. The Act creates an expectation that state budget decisions will be assessed for their impacts on child poverty and the State will measure progress on child poverty reduction over time. We urge our elected leaders to make policy choices in the coming state budget that quickly and sharply reduce the number of children experiencing poverty," **said Kate Breslin, Schuyler Center President and CEO.**

"Child poverty is indisputably a policy choice. We can either help a few beat the odds with needed services, or we can change the odds for all by raising family incomes, closing racial inequities, and making stable housing more affordable. New York State set an ambitious goal to cut child poverty in half in 10 years, but we haven't made the progress we need to yet. Children urgently need change now," **said Larry Marx, CEO, The Children's Agenda.**

"United Way of the Greater Capital Region is committed to creating opportunities so that all children and teens have access to the programs and resources needed to thrive," **said Peter Gannon, President and CEO, United Way of the Greater Capital Region.** "With over one million New York children living in struggling households, we must invest in their future by ensuring every

child has access to healthy school meals, families benefit from tax credits that can lift them out of poverty, and robust investments in education and childcare provide the foundation for lasting success. Together, we can create a community where opportunity is within reach for all."

"United Way of New York City remains committed to eradicating child poverty throughout New York City and New York State. We envision a future that is equitable for all, and we will continue to work towards the health and safety of children throughout the five boroughs," **said Grace Bonilla, President and CEO at United Way of New York City.** "Our True Cost of Living report found that 50 percent of working age New Yorkers are struggling to cover their basic needs. As the cost of living continues to rise, aid like SNAP, cash assistance, the Working Families Tax Credit and increased access to affordable childcare are critical. Our children deserve a future where they can thrive and we are obligated to deliver."

"United Way of New York State proudly supports the efforts of the Governor and CPRAC to meet this audacious goal of reducing child poverty by 50%. Too many families are struggling to make ends meet which negatively impacts the ability of children to succeed in school, be healthy, and live in resilient communities," **said Kelly Dodd, Vice President of United Way of New York State.** "Adoption of the recommendations will be transformative for millions of lives across the state and demonstrate New York as a leader in the nation choosing to address the harmful impacts of childhood poverty."

"I take my role as a Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council member seriously, the children and families of New York from Staten Island, to Westchester to Buffalo and every place in between are counting on us to do what is right and reduce child poverty by 50% as directed, **said Allison Lake, Executive Director of Westchester Children's Association.** We know what works, we've run the numbers, expanding the Empire State Child Credit, offering more subsidized housing options and making public benefit reform. If we don't act now, with boldness and urgency the long-term implications for today's children and societal costs will be severe. And we will have no one to blame but ourselves."

"Our leaders in Albany have the chance to do what was once unimaginable: reduce childhood poverty by half over the next decade. With these dynamic recommendations, including a proposed statewide housing voucher program and a working families tax credit, we now have a roadmap to addressing one of the greatest issues plaguing our state today," **said Christine C. Quinn, President and CEO of Win.** "Beyond their ability to reduce childhood poverty, many of these solutions would address the root causes of other crises, like family homelessness. These multidimensional solutions will greatly benefit our state and should be enacted expeditiously."

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