



TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

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Governor Signs Child Poverty Reduction Act Into Law

Commits NY to Cutting Child Poverty in Half

Last night, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law. The act commits New York to cutting child poverty in half in ten years and provides the tools needed to achieve this bold goal. It establishes the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to develop a strategic plan and requires an annual public report of the effects of budget proposals on child poverty and regular reporting on progress.

More than 895,000 New York children live in poverty. That is 1 out of 5 children whose families struggle to meet basic needs. In Rochester it is even higher with almost 1 out of 2 children living in poverty. Child poverty has been compounded by the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn.

"I grew up in a family of 12 children in a rural town outside of Binghamton," said **Assemblymember Harry Bronson** who championed the Act in the Assembly. "My mom and dad both worked full-time jobs and worked the family farm to provide for us. So I know what it is like to deal with poverty. Whether in a rural or urban community, we know the detrimental effects living in poverty can have. Fortunately, we also know we can take action today to ensure New York children do not continue to suffer from the physical, educational, and social impacts of poverty."

The Act garnered widespread, bipartisan support across New York. "Whether living in upstate or downstate; rural, urban, or suburban communities – New Yorkers know it is time to make a bold commitment for our children," said **Larry Marx, CEO at The Children's Agenda**. "Cutting child poverty in New York in half over 10 years is entirely realistic. England did just that from 1994 – 2008 with tax credits, expanding child care, universal preschool, and home visiting programs. We can do the same here in New York."

Grassroots efforts led by The Children's Agenda garnered 367 letters from parents and other community members in support of the Act. Reflecting the connections between poverty and other child outcomes, numerous Monroe County organizations also signed on in support, including Action for a Better Community, Bivona Child Advocacy Center, FoodLink, Golisano Children's Hospital, Ibero, Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, Service

Employees International Union 1199, United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes, University of Rochester, and others.

“The research is clear: poverty has adverse effects on the physical, developmental, and behavioral health of children,” said **Patrick Brophy, M.D., Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Golisano Children’s Hospital**. “Thanks to Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos' efforts, New York State has taken an important forward toward applying the vast resources we have at our disposal to end the public health crisis of child poverty.”

“Our mission is to end hunger, but we cannot begin to address this monumental challenge without first talking about eliminating poverty, said **Julia Tedesco, President and CEO of Foodlink**. “The signing of this legislation signifies that New York is ready to take a significant step toward reducing both.”

The Act will further advance efforts to eliminate poverty in Rochester and Monroe County. “The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative applauds Governor Kathy Hochul for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act and taking a significant step to help our state’s most vulnerable residents,” said **Aqua Y. Porter, RMAPI Executive Director**. “We know too well in Rochester the devastating effects that poverty has on our youngest neighbors, and this legislation will make a significant investment in their future and in the long-term well-being of our entire state. Research has shown that children living in poverty are at higher risk for a wide variety of health and social problems throughout their lifetime, so we know this crisis puts the future of our community at risk. This legislation will not only address the persistently high poverty rate for children in our community, but also reinforces the RMAPI Guiding Principles to address structural racism, address trauma, and build community.”

“Today is a day of hope for Rochester's children. We commend Governor Hochul for her leadership and thank Assemblymember Harry Bronson and Senator Jessica Ramos for championing this issue,” said Larry Marx. “With the Child Poverty Reduction Act, we can revitalize our economy and improve the quality of life in our entire region.”

Statements from NYS Children’s Advocacy Coalition Members

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act is the result of thoughtful work by a broad coalition of partners who envision a state that works to raise children out of poverty and into opportunity,” said **Kate Breslin, President and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy**. “We commend Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for recognizing the critical importance of this legislation as New York recovers from the impact of the pandemic. By signing this bill into law today, Governor Hochul has boldly set the expectation that New York will intentionally, significantly, and consistently cut child poverty, year over year. Beyond that, and just as important, the law holds policymakers publicly accountable for whether and how policy and budget decisions affect children living in poverty. The Child Poverty Reduction Act creates the roadmap to a future in which New York is deliberate about reducing child poverty and addressing equity.”

“We applaud Governor Hochul for signing this bill into law and thank Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for championing this legislation. At a time when all Americans are waiting to see if Congress will make the expansion of the Child Tax Credit permanent, we are proud to see New York State springing into action,” said **Richard R. Buery, Jr., CEO of Robin Hood**. “Across New York State, roughly one million children are living in

poverty, and the sad reality is Black children are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than their white neighbors. We look forward to working with our partners to make the implementation of this law — which has the potential to right that wrong and set us on a path to cutting child poverty in half over the next decade — a success.”

“We congratulate our Governor and our Legislature for deciding to clearly and publicly address child poverty in New York State,” said **Dr. Warren Seigel, Chair of New York State American Academy of Pediatrics, District II**. “From Buffalo to the Bronx and on to Long Island, pediatricians have been trying to address the negative impacts poverty has on the development and life chances of hundreds of thousands of children. Although we try to help families access the supports and services they need when they visit our clinics and offices, the struggle is constant and the results uneven for many of the children most at risk. If properly implemented, this legislation has the potential to improve the lives of hundreds and thousands of children and families across our state. This law has the potential to improve the brain functioning and life chances for millions of children. We are proud to live in a state that recognizes the value of its children, and stand willing to help and support this work going forward.”

“In a state and a nation that is as affluent as ours, child poverty is not only a moral failure but also an economic threat,” said **Kercena A. Dozier, Executive Director of the Children’s Defense Fund – New York**. “In our State, Black and Latinx children are more than twice as likely as their white peers to live in poverty. Today, the Children’s Defense Fund – New York celebrates Governor Hochul’s signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act (S. 2755C / A. 1160C), the nation’s most significant child poverty reduction goal and a public commitment to cutting New York’s child poverty in half. The signing of this law sets a strong precedent for accountability to reduce child poverty, prioritize racial equity and center the needs of New York’s most vulnerable children and young people – who are, in no uncertain terms, the future of our State.”

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act is a crucial step toward reducing poverty among New York’s youngest residents, and we commend Governor Hochul for her commitment to providing all children with access to the resources and support they need that will provide them with a life that is complete with opportunity,” said **Dia Bryant, Executive Director of The Education Trust–New York**. “Communities of color have been overwhelmingly impacted by the pandemic, and this state legislation, coupled with the potential for additional support through the federal Build Back Better bill and future policy, give us powerful tools to support families.”

“Expanding poverty-reducing policies with timed, specific benchmarks will help hold all of us accountable to doing better for the children of New York,” said **Allison Lake, Executive Director of Westchester Children’s Association**. “Westchester Children’s Association heralds the Child Poverty Reduction Act - we know the experience of poverty and trauma in childhood can have long-lasting impacts on development. In a county as diverse as Westchester, these troubling impacts can fall disproportionately on children of color. We appreciate the work by Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos to move New York closer to a land of opportunity for all.”

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act provides an important vehicle through which our state can prioritize poverty reduction measures centered in accountability and racial equity, ” said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**. “Even before the pandemic, over 700,000 children lived in poverty across the state, and their families were disproportionately from New York's Black, Latinx and immigrant communities where systemic barriers to economic mobility have persisted despite caregiver engagement in the labor force. As we consider the ways in which the pandemic has deepened economic inequities for households statewide, we applaud Governor Hochul for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law, and with it taking a crucial step forward in New York's fight to combat child poverty.”

“With the adoption of the Child Poverty Reduction Act, New York State is saying that children's well-being matters-- and taking the first step toward changing the trajectory for a whole generation,” said **Timothy Hathaway, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse New York**. “We know that poverty negatively impacts a child's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. Reducing poverty pays dividends for all New Yorkers by strengthening families, reducing risk of abuse and neglect for children, and ultimately making our communities throughout the state better places to work and live.”

“The New York Immigration Coalition thanks Governor Hochul for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law today,” said **Liza Schwartzwald, Senior Manager of Education Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition**. “Immigrant children make up 41% of all children in New York State living in low-income families. This legislation marks a critical leap forward in the state's fight to assist the families most in need, and we’re grateful to Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for supporting it in the Legislature. We look forward to building on this work to ensure that all children in New York State can thrive.”

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