

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fiscal Policy Center Launched by Connecticut Think Tank

As part of its efforts to promote wise state investments in children and families, Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based think tank, today announced the launch of the Fiscal Policy Center. The Fiscal Policy Center at Connecticut Voices for Children will provide research, analysis, and recommendations on state and federal budget and tax policies, including their impact on education, health care, human services, and family economic security.

The Fiscal Policy Center is an expansion of Connecticut Voices' longstanding budget and tax policy work. Many policy ideas promoted by Connecticut Voices have been enacted into law in recent years, including a state earned income tax credit for working families, a more progressive income tax, and a mechanism for resolving revenue forecast disputes between the legislature and Governor. By establishing the Fiscal Policy Center, Connecticut Voices plans to engage more naturally and forcefully in fiscal policy matters beyond those traditionally seen as children's issues.

"We must invest in schools, health care, transportation, and other public services to grow our economy and give every Connecticut resident the opportunity to thrive," said Jamey Bell, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices. "Our tax and budget analysis will help our state find ways to make these vital investments in a fiscally responsible manner."

Fiscal analysis, both in areas that directly affect children and those that do not, takes on greater importance in light of the ongoing economic and budget crises in the state, Bell said. Connecticut Voices plans to add staff for the Fiscal Policy Center to further expand its policy work.

The work of the new Fiscal Policy Center will be led by Senior Policy Fellow Wade Gibson. "As Connecticut's economic and budget challenges deepen, reliable fiscal analysis is key to helping lawmakers create sound policies that build our state's future," Gibson said. "Failing to invest in education or allowing the state's tax base to erode would jeopardize Connecticut's economy and the well-being of the people who live here."

Gibson began his work for Connecticut Voices in 2009 while at Yale Law School and continued full time after graduation. Prior to joining the organization, he was policy director for Ned Lamont's gubernatorial campaign, legislative correspondent for Congressman Lloyd Doggett,

and a management consultant in Texas and Qatar. Gibson studied behavioral economics at Princeton, and received his J.D. from Yale Law School. He serves on the national board of the American Constitution Society and is an officer in the United States Navy Reserve.

The announcement of the Fiscal Policy Center was welcomed by state policymakers.

“Connecticut Voices is a thorough source of analysis of Connecticut’s budget and tax policies,” said Benjamin Barnes, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. “As Connecticut and the nation continue to face economic challenges Connecticut Voices’ contribution to the debate is important for policymakers from all sides.”

“In 2009, when Connecticut faced massive deficits and a budget impasse between the General Assembly and Governor, Connecticut Voices stepped forward with a commonsense concept that helped the parties reach agreement,” said Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr., Connecticut Senate President Pro Tempore. “Ever since, our consensus revenue forecasting law has helped to turn what could be a contentious part of the budget process into an important joint statement by the executive and legislative branches.”

[See attached fact sheet for additional comments from policymakers and others on the Fiscal Policy Center.]

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State Leaders Welcome the Fiscal Policy Center at CT Voices

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- **Sen. Donald E. Williams, Jr.**, Connecticut Senate President Pro Tempore

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- **Benjamin Barnes**, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management

“The policy analysts at Connecticut Voices for Children have provided consistently superlative, balanced, objective analyses of Connecticut’s fiscal problems during the past few years. Voices has become the most respected policy shop in the state. The establishment of the Fiscal Policy Center at Connecticut Voices is a much-needed and welcome expansion of its reach.”

- **William Cibes**, former Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and Chancellor Emeritus of the Connecticut State University System

“Connecticut Voices provides valuable insight into budgetary issues facing the General Assembly. The policy positions taken by Connecticut Voices are based on extensive research and are extremely helpful to us during our budget deliberations.”

- **Rep. Pat Widlitz**, House Chair of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

“Connecticut Voices has played a crucial role in making the state’s tax code more progressive and the state’s budget process more efficient. Voices’ work was essential in our successful efforts to restore the estate tax and implement consensus revenue forecasting.”

- **Cameron Staples**, former House Chair of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

“Connecticut Voices for Children has long provided quality, reliable research on a range of issues affecting children and families. The launch of a new Fiscal Policy Center at Voices will help provide more good quality research to inform decisions on tax and budget issues in the state.”

- **Richard Porth**, President and CEO, United Way of Connecticut

“During these difficult economic times, municipal leaders need a place to go to get fair and unbiased tax and budget information. Congratulations to Connecticut Voices for creating the Fiscal Policy Center as a place where elected officials can go for important information needed to make good policy decisions.”

- **Mary Glassman**, Past President, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and First Selectman, Town of Simsbury