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Report: Governor's Proposal Balances Budget on Backs of Children

Over half of proposed cuts to child & family programs

Governor Dannel Malloy's state budget proposal unfairly balances the budget on the backs of children and families, according to an analysis by Connecticut Voices for Children. While spending on the "Children's Budget" – state government spending that directly benefits young people – makes up only a third of the overall state budget, over half (54%) of the Governor's proposed cuts come from children's programs.

"The proposal threatens the overall health and well-being of children and families, exacerbating existing inequalities through changes in both state spending and revenue raising. By cutting our investments in children and families, we are diminishing opportunities for today's children and tomorrow's economy," said Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children. "We need a more balanced approach to the deficit that protects investments in children and families and eliminates unfair tax breaks that are either outdated or indefensible."

Under the Governor's proposal, spending on the Children's Budget would decrease by \$316 million, or 5.1%. Among the cuts proposed by the Governor that would harm Connecticut's young people and families are:

- A cut to K-12 education spending by 4.9%, achieved primarily through reducing reimbursements to cities and towns for special education, transportation, and other services, coupled with a reduction in higher education funding of 9.3%.
- Elimination of health insurance coverage through the HUSKY program for more than 30,000 parents and pregnant women. The Governor's proposal assumes that these adults will purchase private coverage, but research based on the experience of other states indicates that many such parents and pregnant women will find the coverage unaffordable and that many children will lose coverage as well. The proposal would also eliminate funding for the Healthy Start program, which helps pregnant women and new mothers with accessing health care.
- A reduction of \$16 million in funding for existing programs in the Department of Children and Families. Several years of cuts to DCF have placed increasing strain on the agency, which remains under federal court supervision for failing to meet the needs of children in its care.

The proposal further challenges children and decreases support to low income working families by delaying the full restoration of previous cuts made to the state's Earned Income Tax Credit.

"Cuts to health insurance and community services are penny wise and pound foolish," said Sharon Langer, Advocacy Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. "Families who can't access preventive coverage through their health insurance and community providers are likely to turn to emergency rooms and other expensive care."

The report, "Impact of the Governor's FY 2016 Budget on Children," is available on the Connecticut Voices for Children website at www.ctvoices.org.

The Fiscal Policy Center at Connecticut Voices for Children provides research, analysis, and recommendations on state and federal budget and tax policies.

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