



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE: Connecticut Voices for Children Holds 15th Annual Budget Forum

Despite an economic recovery: child poverty is at an all-time high, statewide wage and poverty gaps by race are wider than they were pre-recession and economic segregation has left many cities grappling with high poverty, high unemployment and incomes that do not support a family's most basic needs.

Connecticut Voices for Children hosted its 15th Annual Budget Forum to call for strategic investments in the health and education of children that are essential to the state's long-term economic well-being.

New analysis by Connecticut Voices for Children presented at the Budget Forum finds that, despite increased investment during the recovery, the share of the General Fund dedicated to Connecticut's children shrank from 32.4 percent to 30.6 percent. The declining share is largely a result of the increased share of the budget dedicated to debt service and employee benefits. Even though there was an increase in funding in education and health care since 2010, these investments were insufficient to keep pace with the needs of children and families¹

As a way to address enormous disparities, new interactive 'Mapping Disparities by Race and Place' maps were revealed, finding that, in Hartford, for example, nearly 1/2 of the city's children live in poverty.

That is three times the state child poverty rate of 14.8 percent and 25 times more than some of the state's wealthiest towns.² As a way to address these disparities, Voices also calls on policymakers to support property tax reforms, such as a statewide property tax and low-income circuit-breaker.³

"Young people today will be the workers and leaders who power Connecticut's economy tomorrow, so it is important that all children have a fair chance to succeed. In reality they may not: educational opportunity is greatly affected by a child's race and zip code and families are struggling with an economic recovery that has left many behind, said Acting Executive Director, Sharon Langer."

The event featured keynote speaker, Benjamin Barnes, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management, on Connecticut's fiscal future, and a panel discussion – 'Addressing Municipal and Racial Disparities' – with Kevin Lembo, Comptroller, State of Connecticut; Rep. Joe Aresimowicz, House Majority Leader; Rep. Toni Walker, Co-chair, Appropriations Committee; Joseph McGee, Vice-President for Public Policy and

¹ See our Updated Children's Budget here: <http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/childrens-budget-investing-our-future>

² See Mapping Disparities by Race and Place: <http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/mapping-disparities-race-and-place>

³ See Policy Primer – Property Tax Reform: <http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/policy-primer-reforming-our-property-tax-system>

Programs, Fairfield Business Council; and Anika Singh Lemar, J.D., Clinical Associate Professor, Yale Law School.

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