



News Release

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Budgets Proposals Fall Short of the Investments Necessary to Support Children and Families

New Haven, CT. - Following hundreds of millions of dollars of cuts to health, human services and education to close a billion dollar budget hole in Fiscal Year 2016 (FY 16), lawmakers are once again facing tough choices as they prepare to close another billion dollar deficit for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY 17), all while staring down deficits of approximately two billion dollars in each of the following two fiscal years.

The current budget proposals for FY 17 put forth by the Governor, the Republicans and the Democrats cut spending on crucial programs that support children and families – as defined by our Children’s Budget – by 5.0 percent (\$301.3 million), 3.2 percent (\$192.5 million) and 4.0 percent (\$244.8 million), respectively.

“While children have not caused the current fiscal crisis, the budget proposals disproportionately burden the future of children as a means to address the challenges we face today,” said Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children.

None of the three budget proposals includes any meaningful new revenue. Instead, all three budgets rely on significant cuts to health and human services and to education. While such cuts may offer a short-term solution to the budget gap, they do so at a significant cost to the long-term economic and social structure of the state. There are, however, options available to maintain investments in critical services, such as closing tax loopholes, modernizing outdated tax laws, and calling upon the wealthiest to pay a fair share.

To address our state’s long-term challenges while maintaining investments in the next generation, we recommend taking the following actions:

- **Protect human investments.** Investments in health care, human services and education to support the next generation are critical to ensuring our children grow up ready to meet their full potential. Already, less than one-third of Connecticut’s General Fund spending supports programs that benefit children and families – down from 40 percent in the early 1990s.¹
- **Adopt a balanced approach to the State’s budget.** In confronting the fiscal crisis looming over state budget decisions, the common-sense choice for Connecticut should be a balanced approach that includes revenue, rather than a cuts-only approach that threatens an already fragile economic recovery.

¹ See our 2016 Advocacy Priorities: <http://www.ctvoices.org/advocacy/policy-agenda16>

- **Preserve transparency and accountability in budgeting.** The consolidation of many programs into one line item will make it more difficult to track how our state is investing in children and families, while the lack of current services estimates may underestimate the true cost of cuts to public services.

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Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide research and policy organization that works at the state and federal levels to advance public policies that benefit the state's children, youth and families. For more information on Connecticut Voices, see www.ctvoices.org.