

Statement on Connecticut's Budget Situation: Holding Back Future Generations

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Connecticut Voices for Children strongly believes that a fiscally responsible and stable state budget is the cornerstone for equitable economic growth. The only way to build a strong foundation for long-term inclusive economic prosperity is having a state government with solid finances that is willing and able to support long-term strategies for economic growth and equitable opportunity.

Connecticut's current fiscal crisis is the result of years of short-term budget thinking and a failure to address our state's economic challenges. During the past few months, Connecticut policymakers have struggled with the daunting task of closing a budget gap not of their own making. After years of short-term fixes, they are now confronted with a harsh fiscal reality with no easy solutions.

As the Governor and the Legislature go back to the drawing board this special session, we urge them to ground their work in an understanding of the economic, demographic, and political changes which have created today's ever-growing challenge.

The state budget is the clearest statement of Connecticut's policy priorities. Working from our strengths, and with the courage to address our weaknesses, we can build a more inclusive economy that enables all families to thrive, provides quality education for all children from cradle to career, and provides the support services necessary to ensure that no child is left behind.

To achieve these priorities, the Governor and General Assembly must seek a balanced approach that combines smart, strategic spending in key budget priorities with tax reforms that assure fairness, stability, predictability, and adequacy. Connecticut needs a stable, responsible budget, with real structural reforms, rejecting the crisis-driven, short-term approach that has marked state fiscal policy for years. Legislators should create a stable revenue stream by modernizing Connecticut's tax structure to reflect its changing economy, which is increasingly built on services rather than goods. This will require combining bold revenue reforms with a strategic rethinking of budget priorities that include a renewed willingness for forward-looking investments in education, workforce development, and health.

We understand that this shift will not be easy; Connecticut's fiscal woes are deep, and fixing them will require making many hard decisions. Connecticut Voices for Children believes, however, that working together we can reach a balanced budget that ensures that our state is an attractive place to

find a job, start a business, and raise a family. It is time for everyone that cares about the future of our state to set our differences aside and work towards this common goal.

About Connecticut Voices for Children: Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential. In furtherance of its mission, Connecticut Voices for Children produces high-quality research and analysis, promotes citizen education, advocates for policy change at the state and local level, and works to develop the next generation of leaders.