



News Release

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Governor's Budget Would Reduce State Spending on Children to Historic Low *Budget proposal retains damaging long-term fiscal restrictions*

NEW HAVEN – Connecticut's long-term fiscal health depends on an economy that benefits all families, businesses, and communities. To achieve this objective, the state needs a strategic budget that balances investment with fiscal responsibility. A new report by Connecticut Voices for Children finds that the Governor's latest budget proposal would move Connecticut away from these goals. Under the Governor's plan, the Children's Budget, the share of state spending devoted to children, would drop to 27.2 percent, a historic low, down from 27.8 in the budget approved last November.

The Governor's budget includes significant cuts compared to the biennial budget approved by the General Assembly last October. The proposal would reduce spending in health and human services by 3.9 percent, K-12 education by 3.3 percent, early care and education by 2.6 percent, and higher education by 1.7 percent. The report warns that fixed costs (pensions, debt service, and retiree healthcare), although slightly lower than in the previous year, will continue trending upward, potentially further eroding these programs.

"Many of the cuts included in the Governor's budget will diminish Connecticut's long-term economic growth," says Ray Noonan, Associate Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. "Programs like early care and education drive opportunity, improving education outcomes, enabling parents to work, and boosting productivity. Pulling support from these investments is short-sighted and makes the state less competitive in the future."

In addition to the present budget cuts, the Governor's budget failed to address the impact of four fiscal restrictions inserted into the budget implementer during closed-door negotiations. According to Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children, "Policymakers need the flexibility to meet rapidly-changing needs; however, the combination of a newly defined spending cap, a bond cap, a volatility cap, and a bond lock diminish this flexibility, tying the state's hands and making it more difficult for Connecticut to make the strategic investments necessary to promote equitable opportunity and inclusive economic growth."

The report calls on the General Assembly to prioritize repealing or amending these fiscal restrictions. Furthermore, Connecticut Voices for Children urges policymakers to modernize the state's revenue system, eliminating loopholes and broadening the tax base, and to invest in Connecticut's future, with a focus on child care, education, and healthy child development.

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.