



News Release

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New Budget Proposals Fail to Address Long-Term Fiscal Challenges *Report Calls for Balanced Approach Grounded in Shared Opportunity, Economic Growth*

NEW HAVEN -- Connecticut's future depends on smart fiscal and economic policies that invest in opportunity, workforce development, inclusive economic growth, and shared prosperity. A new analysis from Connecticut Voices for Children finds that both of the recently released legislative budget proposals fail to advance those long-term goals, relying instead on short-term budget fixes and ignoring the need to address the potentially devastating impact of the legislatively created Bond Lock.

While the budget proposals do restore some funding above current levels, with reversals to cuts to municipal aid, education, early childhood, and health care, both plans introduce damaging cuts to the child welfare system, cutting back on essential prevention services. "Connecticut risks losing progress made in protecting children from abuse and neglect and reducing juvenile incarceration," says Lauren Ruth, Advocacy Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. "Both budget proposals include cutbacks in the behavioral health system; these cutbacks would be less effective to serve at-risk youth and create additional long-term costs for the state."

Not only do the proposals fail to make essential investments in children and families, but they also fail to reform our outdated revenue system or respond to concerns about the impact of the Bond Lock: a novel, untested fiscal restriction created last fall without a public hearing or debate.

"The Bond Lock will introduce considerable uncertainty into the budget process while greatly hindering the General Assembly's capacity to address urgent fiscal needs," says Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. "It will limit the state's ability to address both existing and unanticipated challenges, weaken our ability to make necessary investments in children and families, put our credit rating at risk, and potentially increase borrowing costs."

Adding concern to the impact of the Bond Lock is the fact that both plans breach some of the budget rules that the Bond Lock would cement into place for the next decade, highlighting the need to rethink its application.

"Lawmakers should make repealing or delaying the Bond Lock a priority to restore flexibility to our state's budget system and reduce uncertainty," says Rachel Silbermann, Fiscal Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. "Connecticut's long-term economic prosperity requires investing in children and families. To achieve fiscal stability, we need to modernize our revenue system, not limit our options through untested and potentially dangerous fiscal restrictions like the Bond Lock."

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.