



News Release

33 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06510
Voice: 203-498-4240
Fax: 203-498-4242
www.ctvoices.org

JUNE 29, 2018

Contact: Roger Senserrich
Communications Director
203-498-4240 x117
rsenserrich@ctvoices.org

Connecticut Voices for Children Celebrates Legislative Efforts to Advance Equity, Reduce Disparities

NEW HAVEN – A new report from Connecticut Voices for Children provides a broad look across this year’s legislative session and its impact on children and families. According to their analysis, the General Assembly took important steps to advance equity and reduce racial disparities in several significant policy areas, including education, juvenile justice, and healthcare. Legislators, however, did little to address the state’s long-term fiscal deficits, choosing short-term fixes and one-off revenue sources to balance this year’s budget.

The report highlights the first-in-the-nation racial and ethnic impact legislation, committing the legislature to consider the impact of any proposed bill on people of color in Connecticut at a lawmaker’s request. Lawmakers also approved several bills focused on family stability and access to services that help families achieve stability, like expanding health insurance coverage for 13,500 parents in low-income families and setting a list of essential health benefits for health insurance plans. In addition, legislators required the Department of Children and Families to provide at least 10 days’ notice to children and youth in foster care and codified into law the community-based diversion plan to identify at-risk youth and connect them with intervention services that prevent their involvement with the juvenile justice system through the courts.

“The General Assembly adopted several pieces of legislation this year that provide children and families with stronger foundations and more stable, supportive environments,” says Dr. Lauren Ruth, Advocacy Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. “Lawmakers are increasingly committed to a prevention-centered approach based on smart, targeted policies that will help reduce racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare, juvenile justice, and our child welfare system.”

In addition, the General Assembly took some significant steps to make early childhood education more accessible, expanding the Office of Early Childhood’s authority to target high-need populations. Lawmakers also passed legislation to increase recruitment and retention of teachers of color, a policy that research shows can have a positive impact on academic success for Black and Latino students and approved a measure that restricts the use of planned seclusion for students with special needs experiencing anxiety or crisis.

Lawmakers also took steps to address the damaging fiscal restrictions introduced in last year’s budget, limiting the impact of the Bond Lock by shortening its terms and making the volatility cap more flexible. The final budget, however, still included significant cuts to higher education, behavioral health, and juvenile justice programs. As a result, the Children’s Budget, the share of state spending dedicated to children and families sank to a new record low, 27.3 percent.

“Looking ahead, our work lies in fiscal policy reforms that will establish a stable foundation to support the strategic investments in education, health, and workforce development necessary to accelerate economic recovery and make the state more competitive and equitable,” says Jamie Mills, Director of Fiscal Policy and Economic Inclusion at Connecticut Voices for Children.

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.