



# News Release

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## What Candidates for Public Office and Voters Need to Know about Improving the Lives of Connecticut's Children

NEW HAVEN – Connecticut Voices for Children today released its Candidate Briefing Book, an overview of the challenges the state faces and a roadmap for voters and policymakers to move forward. The report explains the roots of Connecticut's budgetary challenges, describes the current state of our economy, and offers specific policy solutions to ensure that all children can achieve their full potential, regardless of race, family income, or ZIP code.

Connecticut's economy has underperformed in comparison to its neighboring states in recent years. Slow job growth, no Gross State Product growth, stagnant and unequal wage growth, and increasing pressure on the state budget from decades of poor policy choices have combined to create strong headwinds to fostering broad-based economic prosperity. As a result, Connecticut is now confronting three interdependent crises: persistent state budget deficits, a slow economic recovery since the recession, and growing economic and racial disparities. Lagging economic recovery has reduced state revenue, starving the state of funding. Year after year of budget deficits have resulted in cuts to essential services that are vital to reduce racial disparities and spur economic growth.

“For Connecticut to overcome its current crisis, policymakers must look beyond piecemeal solutions and adopt a long-term fiscal and economic plan grounded in opportunity and equitable growth,” says Jamie Mills, Director of Fiscal Policy and Economic Inclusion at Connecticut Voices for Children. “Policymakers must view equity, predictable budgets, and investments in economic growth as necessary, integrated building blocks of a strategy to move the state forward.”

The report proposes a comprehensive strategy grounded in values of equitable opportunity and inclusive economic growth, covering three areas:

- **Thriving families:** Connecticut should advance programs that enable parents to work and care for their children, fostering good health, safety, and stability. This includes affordable, high-quality early care and education, access to robust health care, and child welfare and juvenile justice systems that focus on healthy development and prevention.
- **Education excellence:** Connecticut should focus on reducing educational disparities and open new avenues to opportunity by addressing systemic barriers to success.
- **Inclusive economic growth:** Connecticut needs to implement fiscal reforms to move the state toward long-term budget stability by addressing its unfunded liabilities, adopting transparent and data-driven evaluation of expenditures, and addressing structural inequities in the tax system.

“As candidates consider how to move Connecticut into a brighter future, committing to equity and opportunity as guiding principles will help ensure policy solutions are both the smart thing to do and the right thing to do,” says Dr. Lauren Ruth, Advocacy Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. “Reducing ethnic and racial disparities should be at the center of the state's priorities.”

*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.*