



Connecticut Voices for Children 2022 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

The Connecticut General Assembly adjourned at midnight on Wednesday, May 4th after a short but successful session. Advocates and community members helped pass the state's first Child Tax Credit, expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit, won healthcare coverage for thousands of immigrant children, achieved huge investments in childcare and mental health care services, and secured commitments to fund the Baby Bonds program, implement tax transparency policies, and address lead poisoning across the state. Many of these victories will require sustained advocacy to ensure they continue to benefit Connecticut's children and families for years to come.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Before adjourning, the General Assembly adopted [HB 5506](#), a \$24 billion FY 2023 budget and implementer bill. The budget increased state spending by 6.5% after unexpectedly strong revenue collections and federal funding created an estimated \$4.8 billion surplus. The budget included \$600 million in tax cuts and made significant new investments in childcare, mental health care, and other vital services. Following the legislative session, the Rainy Day Fund remains at its statutory maximum of more than \$3 billion. The state will set aside \$3.5 billion in surplus revenue to pay down pension debt, reducing future debt payments.

On the last day of session, [SB 9](#) made technical amendments and corrections to HB 5506.

The Office of Fiscal Analysis projects a budget deficit of \$541 million in FY 24 and \$354 million in FY 25.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

Passed Both Chambers and Signed by the Governor

Housing:

- [S.B. 298](#), **An Act Establishing the Urban Homeownership Loan Fund**, which establishes a fund to help residents in lower-income neighborhoods purchase homes, was included in the budget. \$20 million of Urban Act bonds was earmarked for this initiative.
- [H.B. 5045](#), **An Act Reducing Lead Poisoning**, which strengthens early intervention in instances of lead poisoning by gradually reducing the blood lead level that triggers parental notifications and home inspections to align with CDC recommendations; empowers the CT Department of Public Health to require more frequent testing of children living in cities and towns where exposure to lead is most common; and commits \$30 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan for lead case management and remediation programs.

Education

- **S.B. 232: An Act Concerning the Excess Cost Grant for Special Education**, which will replace the existing threshold for the excess cost grant for special education with a tiered threshold system based on the property wealth of a town. In the final budget, section 268 requires a higher level of reimbursement from the General Fund through the State Department of Education to local and regional boards of education for special education Excess Cost expenses, which is anticipated to result in an additional \$15.5 million in special education funding.

Child

Care

- **H.B. 5465: An Act Increasing Early Childhood Educator Salaries and Expanding Child Care Opportunities for Families**. The budget includes over \$100 million in additional funding for child care in the upcoming fiscal year.
- **H.B. 5279: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood**. In FYs 23 and 24, the State will require OEC to administer an emergency stabilization grant program for certain school readiness programs and child care centers receiving state financial assistance.
- **H.B. 5115: An Act Requiring a Plan to Increase the Number of Child Care Centers on or Near Each Campus of the Regional Community-Technical Colleges and State Universities**. The budget includes up to \$10 million in bonding to increase the number of child care centers on or near each campus of the regional community-technical colleges or the state universities.
- **S.B. 1: An Act Concerning Childhood Mental and Physical Health Services in Schools**, which expands health services in schools, increases wages for child care workers, and creates a minority teacher scholarship fund.

Health

Care

- **S.B. 284: An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for An Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status**. The state budget expanded HUSKY's eligibility to immigrant children, regardless of status, who come from households earning up to 201% of the federal poverty level, and children earning between 201% and 325% of the federal poverty level also qualify but are subject to an asset test, and who were 12 and younger on Jan. 1, 2022, and allows any child in that age group who signs up for coverage to keep the insurance through age 19.
- **S.B. 2: An Act Expanding Preschool and Mental Health Behavioral Services for Children**, which will make mobile crisis centers available 24/7 statewide, address the social determinants of mental health, create an equity-based mental health fund for people without access to mental health services, help improve recruitment and retention of social workers and psychiatric and behavioral health providers
- **H.B. 5001, An Act Concerning Children's Mental Health**, which will improve the availability and provision of mental health, behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services to children.

Fiscal and Economic Policy

- **H.B. 5403: An Act Establishing a Child Tax Credit Against the Personal Income Tax**. The budget creates a new Connecticut child tax credit that will provide \$250-per-child (for up to three kids) to single parents making under \$100,000 and couples making less than \$200,000. The total tax relief this year will be \$125 million.

- **[S.B. 443](#): An Act Concerning the Tax Incidence Report and Tax Incidence Analyses.** The budget expands the scope of the DRS tax incidence study to include tax rates for the top 1% and 5% of tax filers and moves the date for the next study up from February 2024 to December 2023.
- **[S.B. 384](#): An Act Implementing the Treasurer’s Recommendation’s Concerning the Connecticut Baby Bond Trust Program.** The budget authorizes the state treasurer to issue \$50 million in bonds to fund the Baby Bonds program, which will create trusts for all low-income babies born in the state starting in July 2023. When kids reach age 18, they will be able to use the money in the trust to pay for education, buying a home or investing in a business in Connecticut, or personal financial investments.
- **[S.B. 383](#): An Act Concerning the Earned Income Tax Credit.** The budget increases the Connecticut earned income tax credit to 41.5% of the federal credit, providing low-income households making less than \$58,000 a year an additional average tax cut of \$225, for a total average tax cut of \$850.
- **[H.B. 5487](#): An Act Concerning the Property Tax Credit Against the Personal Income Tax.** The budget increases the Connecticut property tax credit against the state income tax from a maximum of \$200 to \$300 and it also expands the number of families eligible to claim the credit.
- **[H.B. 5216](#), An Act Concerning Low-Cost Bank Accounts**, which requires Connecticut Banks and Credit Unions to offer a low cost, no overdraft fee account such as the “Bank On” account out of committee. This legislation is a good first step to eliminate costly overdraft fees at state-chartered banks and help families become financially secure.

Bills Opposed by Connecticut Voices for Children that Did Not Pass:

Fiscal and Economic Policy

- **[S.B. 385](#): An Act Concerning the Amount of the Digital Media Tax Credit**, which would have expanded the tax credit benefitting film and digital media production companies.

Criminal Justice

- **[S.B. 16](#): An Act Addressing Gun Violence and Juvenile Crime**, which would have reestablished the state’s firearm trafficking task force, increased gun sale and possession restrictions, mandate the use of electronic monitoring for many young people involved in the criminal legal system, reclassify a number of number of misdemeanors as well as felonies to be considered “serious juvenile offenses” allowing more young people to be transferred to the adult court system, and extend the time a young person can be held in custody.
- **[S.B. 365](#): An Act Concerning Juvenile and Criminal Justice Reforms**, which would have allowed for next day summons for some juvenile offenses, expanded ability for the state to detain young people, allowed GPS monitoring of juveniles under certain circumstances, allowed transfer to the regular criminal docket of 13- and 14-year-olds charged with certain violent crimes, established a "Trauma, Truancy, Mediation and Mentorship" program, and established a committee to evaluate the criminal justice system for juveniles and adults.
- **[S.B. 386](#): An Act Concerning a Study of the Juvenile Delinquency Laws of this State**, which would have created a working group tasked with studying the youth crime laws in Connecticut.
- **[H.B. 5418](#): An Act Revising Juvenile and Criminal Justice Statutes and Insurance Statutes Concerning Theft of a Motor Vehicle**, which would have allowed for next day summons for some juvenile offenses, expanded ability for the state to detain young people, allowed GPS monitoring of juveniles under certain circumstances, allowed transfer to the regular criminal docket of 13- and 14-

year-olds charged with certain violent crimes, established a distinct crime for motor vehicle theft, eliminated the JJPOC, and excluded certain crimes from automatic erasure provisions.

Housing

- **[S.B. 296](#): An Act Eliminating the Requirement to Store the Personal Property of Evicted Tenants**, which would have eliminated the requirement that landlords or municipalities store the personal property of evicted tenants.
- **[H.B. 5345](#): An Act Concerning Security Deposits**, which would have removed the limits on security deposits that a landlord can require from a tenant.
- **[H.B. 5347](#): An Act Concerning the Review of Criminal Histories for Prospective Tenants**, which would have allowed landlords to consider the erased criminal history of any prospective tenant.

LEGISLATIVE DISAPPOINTMENTS

These bills, which we supported, unfortunately did not pass during the 2022 legislative session:

Housing

- **[H.B. 5429](#): An Act Concerning Transit-Oriented Development**, which would have required cities and towns to allow for higher density housing construction near train and bus rapid transit stations
- **[H.B. 5204](#): An Act Concerning A Needs Assessment And Fair Share Plans For Municipalities To Increase Affordable Housing**, which requires each town to require a statewide assessment of the affordable housing shortage and requires every town to create an enforceable affordable housing plan.
- **[H.B. 5209](#): An Act Concerning Housing Authority Jurisdiction**, which would have allowed housing authorities to construct projects outside of the municipality in which they are based.
- **[S.B. 302](#): An Act Establishing A Housing Authority Resident Quality Of Life Improvement Grant Program And A Housing Choice Voucher Task Force And Requiring The Disclosure Of Certain Natural Person Ownership Interests In Real Property**, which would have provided funding for resident-chosen improvements at housing authority properties, mandated a study of the housing voucher system, and required landlords to provide the name of a real person (rather than an LLC) who can be contacted about issues with their property.
- **[S.B. 168](#): An Act Establishing a Right to Housing**, which would have required state agencies to consider residents' right to housing in all decision-making that might affect housing security.
- **[H.B. 5208](#): An Act Concerning Housing Opportunities For Justice-Impacted Persons**, which would have prevented landlords from considering a prospective tenant's criminal conviction after certain time periods.
- **[S.B. 299](#): An Act Establishing a Task Force Concerning the Use of The State-Administered General Assistance Program to Address Homelessness**, which would have established a task force to examine the use of the state-administered general assistance program and other state assistance to address homelessness.

- **S.B. 300: An Act Concerning a Study of Excessive Rent Increases**, which would have required the state to study excessive rent increases and recommend legislation to prevent them.

Transportation

- **H.B. 5254: An Act Ensuring Access to Parking Near Public Beaches and Recreational and Scenic Areas**, which would have prohibited towns from restrict access to parking near public beaches and recreational areas.

Education

- **H.B. 5299: An Act Increasing the Age for Eligibility for the Postsecondary Education Funding Program Offered by the Department of Children and Families**, which would have raised the age at which a young person with a history of involvement in Connecticut’s child welfare system can receive services and funding to support participation in a higher education, vocational, or employment training program.

Child Care

- **S.B. 291: An Act Concerning Certain Protections For Group And Family Child Care Homes**, which would have protected licensed group and family child care homes from overly restrictive zoning laws and landlord requirements, allowing more child care homes to open or remain open

Fiscal and Economic Policy

- **S.B. 478: An Act Concerning Property Assessment Appeals and Homeownership Incentive Tracts, Establishing Tax Credit Voucher Programs to Incentivize Commercial Leases and Residential Conversions and Authorizing the Capital Region Development Authority to Solicit Investment Funds**. This bill would have expanded a homeownership incentive program and encouraged increased investment in mixed use residential development.
- **S.B. 481: An Act Investing State Funds in Underserved and Low-Income Communities**, which would have invested new funding in community banks, community credit unions and community development financial institutions to promote community or economic development in certain underserved communities. The bill also would have helped make loans available to low-income residents who otherwise would not qualify.
- **S.B. 487: An Act Establishing the Infant and Toddler Early Care and Family Support Initiative**, which would have required the Office of Early Childhood to establish an Infant and Toddler Early Care and Family Support Initiative to provide grants to support the growth and enhancement of a high-quality early childhood care and education system. The bill would have created and subsidized infant and toddler early care spots in high-need areas throughout the state.
- **H.B. 5489: An Act Concerning the Indexing of Certain Personal Income Tax Thresholds and Exemption Amounts**, which would have indexed personal income tax and exemption thresholds to inflation, preventing hidden long-term tax increases on low- and middle-income families.
- **H.B. 5490: An Act Establishing a Personal Income Tax Deduction for Rent Paid on a Primary Residence in the State**, which would have created an income tax deduction for renters similar to the property tax deduction that exists for homeowners.

- **S.B. 21: An Act Concerning a State-Wide Property Tax on Certain Residential Real Property**, which would have established a state-wide property tax of 2 mills on residential real estate worth more than \$1.2 million. The revenue raised through this tax would have gone to public schools.
- **S.B. 27: An Act Increasing and Expanding the Property Tax Credit**, which would have increased and expanded the property tax credit to benefit more low- and middle-income families. (A different expansion of the property tax credit was included in the state budget).
- **S.B. 28: An Act Establishing a Capital Gains Surcharge**, which would have created a one percent capital gains tax surcharge on Connecticut's highest earners.
- **S.B. 381: An Act Concerning a Study of State Revenue Collections**, which would have required the Department of Revenue Services to study the state's tax collection processes to improve efficiency.
- **S.B. 400: An Act Concerning Payments to Payments to Municipalities in Lieu of Property Taxes**, which would have required the state to study the program that provides payments to municipalities in lieu of property taxes.
- **H.B. 5437: An Act Concerning Equity and the Governor's Budget**, which would have required the Governor's budget document to include an explanation of the Governor's efforts to further equity in the state.

Criminal Justice

- **SB 387: An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee**, which would have strengthened Connecticut's accountability mechanisms as well as community-based services for young people by adding members with lived experience to the JJPOC, broadening the definition of racial profiling to include disparate treatment based in part on race or ethnicity; helping to prevent racial disparities in pedestrian stops, and expanding the community-based diversion system so more young people receive support rather than solely isolation and punishment.
- **SB 392: An Act Concerning Statements Made by Juveniles**, which would have expanded protections regarding the use of confessions, admissions that indicate guilt, and statements made without parents present for young people under age 18.

Bills Opposed by Connecticut Voices for Children that Passed This Session

- **H.B. 5417: An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice and Services and Firearms Background Checks**, which requires expedited court dates for children who have been arrested, requires assessment for needed services for children who have been arrested, provides for electronic monitoring for some young people charged with motor vehicle or property theft, extended the time that children can be held in custody, expands of provisions imposing upon a child special juvenile probation in the case of murder or first degree manslaughter, and requires the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection to inform the Chief of Police or other appropriate official of the town in which a firearms permit applicant resides if such applicant fails a background check.