

RACIAL JUSTICE

Require Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements for All Legislation and Rule-Making

New York's pervasive racial and ethnic disparities must be addressed through systemic change. Our State can lead the nation in aiming towards equity in all policies by no longer passing legislation or adopting rules without examining whether or not these policies will create, eliminate, or perpetuate racial and ethnic disparities. New York should adopt a requirement that all bills and amendments to bills in the legislature and all proposed rules be accompanied by racial and ethnic impact statements at the time of introduction, and prohibit the passage of bills or rules that increase racial or ethnic disparities.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

End Child Poverty in New York

One in five children in New York live in poverty, with children of color disproportionately impacted. This year, New York has an opportunity to lead the nation in eliminating child poverty. The State can commit to cutting New York's child poverty rate in half by 2030 by passing the Child Poverty Reduction Act. The legislation would require the Budget Director to evaluate the budget's effect on child poverty reduction each year and establishes an advisory council to evaluate and provide oversight of the effort.

Use the State Tax Code to Improve Income Supports

New York must use its State Tax Code to improve income supports and reduce child poverty. New York should: (1) Expand and strengthen the Empire State Child Tax Credit (CTC) by establishing a new early childhood tax credit of up to \$1,000 per child for children ages 0-3, eliminating the credit's phase-in, and expanding the existing credit up to \$500 for children ages 4-17; (2) Increase and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by raising the state's match from 30% to 45% of the federal program and extending EITC to childless workers under age 25; (3) Allow tax credits to be paid to families quarterly; and (4) Make EITC available to more immigrant New Yorkers by adjusting filing requirements to mimic those of the Empire State Child Tax Credit.

YOUTH JUSTICE

End the Arrest and Prosecution of Children Under 12

Under current law, children as young as 7 years old may be arrested and prosecuted as juvenile delinquents in Family Court. Children under 12 may be subject to police questioning, pre-trial detention with older youth, probation, and mandatory confinement. Children of color are disproportionately represented among young children charged in court. By raising the age from age 7 to 12 we can better serve elementary age children who come to the attention of police through existing community-based services.

Expand Youthful Offender Protections Up Through Age 25 and Permit Retroactivity (\$282)

New York's Youthful Offender ("YO") law provides the opportunity for youth under the age of 19 to have a criminal conviction set aside and replaced with a confidential, non-criminal adjudication. Yet, at age 19, this critical protection is no longer available and young people face mandatory prison sentences and lifelong criminal records that create barriers to education, jobs, and housing. We should strengthen existing protections under the law and create a new "Young Adult" status covering youth up through age 25. We also support legislation that permits young people who were eligible for YO, but did not receive it, to petition a court for the status 5 years following their sentence.

Embrace Solutions Not Suspensions

Schools should be places where students are included, respected, and supported. But in New York, students lose hundreds of thousands of days in the classroom each year because of suspensions, often for normal youthful behavior. These punishments disproportionately impact Black and Latinx students and those with disabilities. Solutions Not Suspensions requires schools to use proven alternatives to suspension by requiring codes of conduct to include restorative approaches to discipline; limiting the use of suspensions for students in K through 3rd grade to only the most serious behavior; shortening the maximum length of suspension from 180 to 20 school days; and requiring that students who are suspended receive academic instruction.

Protect Juveniles During Police Interrogation

New legislation would clarify that interrogation of a child is necessary only when the life and safety of the subject child or another person is in danger. When interrogation is necessary, a child must first consult with counsel before any questioning can take place.

CHILD WELFARE

Protect Preventive Services in the State Budget

State budget cuts to essential community-based preventive services threaten to weaken already vulnerable Black and Latinx communities, which have been hardest-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. As the governor and legislators engage in the upcoming budget process, they must commit to protecting the kinds of services that keep families together. These services prevent child abuse and neglect, and reduce the likelihood that children will be removed from their home and placed in foster care.

Ensure Successful Family First Implementation

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) seeks to drive down institutional care in child welfare, promote family stability and allow states to seek federal reimbursement for evidence-based services. We will actively advocate for appropriate codification of the federal law in State law and our budget, to maximize the opportunities to support families and promote child well-being.

Foster Care Ombudsman

The Office would provide support to families, including kinship caregivers, caring for children in foster care. Operating as a problem-solving team of professionals, the Ombudsman would clarify rules and roles with regard to issues like visitation, education and transportation. It would also increase accountability and transparency by requiring regular data collection and reporting to promote better long-term outcomes.

HEALTH JUSTICE

End Lead Poisoning in New York

New York has more children with elevated blood lead levels than any other state. Lead exposure rates in some parts of New York are 5 to 6 times higher than those in Flint, Michigan at the height of its lead crisis, with poor children and children of color disproportionately impacted. To reduce lead exposure, New York must establish minimum maintenance standards for lead hazards in housing, adopt a state Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule and provide funding to find and fix lead hazards before they harm children. The State should also direct the Department of Health to submit a Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) state plan amendment (SPA) establishing a Health Service Initiative (HSI) leveraging \$25 million in lead poisoning prevention funds to draw down \$50 million in federal matching funds, making \$75 million available. Furthermore, the State should provide an additional \$34.5 million for counties to implement the new blood lead action level of 5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), which since being lowered from 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ has caused a five-fold increase in lead poisoning case volume at local health departments.

Expand Health Coverage for Children and Families

Despite the coverage gains our State has made in recent years, too many New York families still lack affordable and comprehensive health coverage. Furthermore, coverage options remain fragmented and confusing, creating barriers for consumers. Today, over 100,000 New York children remain uninsured. While most of these children are eligible for coverage, families are often unaware of coverage options or afraid to seek coverage because of their immigration status. New York has numerous policy options to overcome these barriers, not the least of which is passage of the New York Health Act, which will provide universal coverage for all New Yorkers. Health coverage for children and families could also be improved by:

- Extending postpartum coverage for women covered by Medicaid.
- Allocating \$13 million to create a temporary state-funded Essential Plan for New Yorkers up to 200% of the federal poverty level who have had COVID-19 and are excluded from coverage due to immigration status, our State can cover over 5,000 uninsured New Yorkers who have suffered directly from the pandemic and may require ongoing care to fully recover and provide for their families.
- Increasing the health insurance navigator budget from \$27.2M to \$32M to guarantee high-quality enrollment services and provide an additional \$5M for community-based organizations to educate consumers about coverage options, particularly in immigrant communities who often live in fear due to threats at the federal level in recent years.

Restore Funding for School-Based Health Centers

\$5M in permanent funding is needed to restore FY2018-19 cuts to New York's school-based health centers (SBHCs), which provide critical health services to students in medically underserved communities, thereby improving both health and educational outcomes.

Secure Sustainable Funding for Early Intervention Services

Many children with developmental delays and disabilities experience difficulty accessing vital services that could help them catch up or prevent their delays from worsening. Ever since drastic cuts were made in 2011, high-quality early intervention (EI) providers have been forced to close or stop taking EI clients. To address these issues, the State should increase EI rates by 10 % and require insurance companies pay their fair share to cover the cost of EI services by adopting a covered lives assessment of at least \$40 million.