

The Children's Defense Fund – New York Celebrates the Signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act

Legislation Commits New York to Cutting Child Poverty in Half

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New York, N.Y. – Today, the Children's Defense Fund – New York (CDF-NY) celebrates Governor Hochul's recent signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act ([S.2755C/A.1160C](#)) into law. This critical legislation, sponsored by Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblymember Harry Bronson, lays a strong foundation towards ending child poverty in New York. The Act makes a public commitment of cutting our State's child poverty rate in half within ten years and establishes a Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to develop a strategic plan towards achieving this bold goal.

The Child Poverty Reduction Act was a focus of CDF-NY's 2021 Week of Action, during which CDF-NY Beat the Odds[®] Scholars & Youth Advocates met with their state elected officials to share their stories and urge their leaders to support this important legislation. CDF-NY Beat the Odds[®] Scholars and Youth Advocates also raised their powerful voices to advocate for the Child Poverty Reduction Act by speaking in strong favor of the policy at legislative briefings and virtual rallies. The CDF-NY Beat the Odds[®] scholarship program provides social and academic college readiness programming to high school and college students working to overcome tremendous obstacles in their personal lives, who demonstrate academic achievement and give back to their communities.

"For far too long, thousands of New York State families have struggled to make ends meet," said **Digna C., CDF-NY Beat the Odds[®] Scholar & Youth Advocate**. "Families have unnecessarily fought to put food on the table and provide a safe home for their children. However, the recent signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act will ensure fewer families live in poverty. I commend Governor Hochul for addressing poverty as a human rights issue and committing to eradicating child poverty. The elimination of poverty is a necessary first step towards eradicating other social problems as it is not a fragmented or isolated problem but instead is the root of many other social issues. I applaud the NY legislature for uniting and focusing on what matters: our children, youth, and families. Although we can't promise that families will never have any hardships, suffering, adversity, or insecurities, we can ensure that families never have to wonder where their children will sleep or if they will have enough food to eat."

"When the Children's Defense Fund – New York invited me to advocate for the Child Poverty Reduction Act, immediately without hesitation, I said yes," said **Lisbeth Tinizhanay, CDF-NY Beat the Odds[®] Scholar & Youth Advocate**. "I understood that my voice could represent millions across the country and

especially in the state. The signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act is only the start of what we as a community can accomplish if we organize and mobilize, and use our voice. I am proud that our efforts were not in vain and that our elected officials followed through on their promises. This win does not only fill me with joy but brings me hope that better times will come. Thank you, Governor Hochul, Senator Ramos, Assemblymember Bronson, and the New York State legislature for giving our children, youth, and families a better future.”

“As a Queens resident and a constituent of Senator Ramos, I couldn't be prouder of our state for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law,” said **Norma Degante, CDF-NY Beat the Odds® Scholar & Youth Advocate**. “No one should struggle to access basic necessities - food, housing, and clothing. The Child Poverty Reduction Act will lift thousands of families out of poverty in the aftermath of COVID-19, which we know has further exacerbated hardships for low-income families, especially those with housing and food insecurity. I applaud Governor Hochul for providing New Yorkers a stronger safety net, so they no longer struggle to obtain their fundamental human rights and taking the necessary steps towards ending child poverty. Our children, youth, their families, and communities, thank you for your commitment to ending child poverty.”

“In a state and a nation that is as affluent as ours, child poverty is not only a moral failure but also an economic threat,” said **Kercena A. Dozier, Executive Director of the Children’s Defense Fund – New York**. “In our State, Black and Latinx children are more than twice as likely as their white peers to live in poverty. Today, the Children’s Defense Fund – New York celebrates Governor Hochul’s signing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act, the nation’s most significant child poverty reduction goal and a public commitment to cutting New York’s child poverty in half. The signing of this law sets a strong precedent for accountability to reduce child poverty, prioritize racial equity and center the needs of New York’s most vulnerable children and young people – who are, in no uncertain terms, the future of our State.”

Statements from CDF-NY Child Advocacy and Faith-Based Partners

“Signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law demonstrates a meaningful and bold commitment by the Governor to not only reduce child poverty, but to also reduce economic disparities in New York State,” said **Reverend Michael A. Walrond, Jr., Senior Pastor at First Corinthian Baptist Church and Advisory Board member of the Children’s Defense Fund – New York**. This will aid in easing the plight for the one in five New York children who live in poverty, and will significantly impact Black and Latinx youth who are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to live in poverty. I pray that one day New York will model what it means to be a state where all young people can flourish.”

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act is the result of thoughtful work by a broad coalition of partners who envision a state that works to raise children out of poverty and into opportunity,” said **Kate Breslin, President and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy**. “We commend Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for recognizing the critical importance of this legislation as New York recovers from the impact of the pandemic. By signing this bill into law today, Governor Hochul has boldly set the expectation that New York will intentionally, significantly, and consistently cut child poverty, year over year. Beyond that, and just as important, the law holds policymakers publicly accountable for whether and how policy and budget decisions affect children living in poverty. The Child Poverty Reduction Act creates the roadmap to a future in which New York is deliberate about reducing child poverty and addressing equity.”

“We applaud Governor Hochul for signing this bill into law and thank Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for championing this legislation. At a time when all Americans are waiting to see if Congress will make the expansion of the Child Tax Credit permanent, we are proud to see New York State springing into action,” said [Richard R. Buery, Jr., CEO of Robin Hood](#). “Across New York State, roughly one million children are living in poverty, and the sad reality is Black children are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than their white neighbors. We look forward to working with our partners to make the implementation of this law — which has the potential to right that wrong and set us on a path to cutting child poverty in half over the next decade — a success.”

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act opens the door to real policy change that will deeply impact the lives of children living in poverty,” said [Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director of FFWA](#). “I applaud Governor Hochul for committing New York State to significantly reduce child poverty over the next ten years. At its core, poverty is an issue of racial justice and equity because Black and brown households with children disproportionately experience poverty. I look forward to supporting the roadmap and concrete policy solutions of the new Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council as we strive to achieve this ambitious goal.”

“We congratulate our Governor and our Legislature for deciding to clearly and publicly address child poverty in New York State,” said [Dr. Warren Seigel, Chair of New York State American Academy of Pediatrics, District II](#). “From Buffalo to the Bronx and on to Long Island, pediatricians have been trying to address the negative impacts poverty has on the development and life chances of hundreds of thousands of children. Although we try to help families access the supports and services they need when they visit our clinics and offices, the struggle is constant and the results uneven for many of the children most at risk. If properly implemented, this legislation has the potential to improve the lives of hundreds and thousands of children and families across our state. This law has the potential to improve the brain functioning and life chances for millions of children. We are proud to live in a state that recognizes the value of its children, and stand willing to help and support this work going forward.”

“Whether living in upstate or downstate; rural, urban, or suburban communities – New Yorkers know it is time to make a bold commitment for our children,” said [Larry Marx, CEO at The Children’s Agenda](#). “Cutting child poverty in New York in half over 10 years is entirely realistic. England did just that from 1994 – 2008 with tax credits, expanding child care, universal preschool, and home visiting programs. We can do the same here in New York.”

“The Child Poverty Reduction Act is a crucial step toward reducing poverty among New York’s youngest residents, and we commend Governor Hochul for her commitment to providing all children with access to the resources and support they need that will provide them with a life that is complete with opportunity,” said [Dia Bryant, Executive Director of The Education Trust–New York](#). “Communities of color have been overwhelmingly impacted by the pandemic, and this state legislation, coupled with the potential for additional support through the federal Build Back Better bill and future policy, give us powerful tools to support families.”

“Expanding poverty-reducing policies with timed, specific benchmarks will help hold all of us accountable to doing better for the children of New York,” said [Allison Lake, Executive Director of Westchester Children’s Association](#). “Westchester Children’s Association heralds the Child Poverty Reduction Act - we know the experience of poverty and trauma in childhood can have long-lasting impacts on development. In a county as diverse as Westchester, these troubling impacts can fall

disproportionally on children of color. We appreciate the work by Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos to move New York closer to a land of opportunity for all."

"The Child Poverty Reduction Act provides an important vehicle through which our state can prioritize poverty reduction measures centered in accountability and racial equity," said [Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York](#). "Even before the pandemic, over 700,000 children lived in poverty across the state, and their families were disproportionately from New York's Black, Latinx and immigrant communities where systemic barriers to economic mobility have persisted despite caregiver engagement in the labor force. As we consider the ways in which the pandemic has deepened economic inequities for households statewide, we applaud Governor Hochul for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law, and with it taking a crucial step forward in New York's fight to combat child poverty."

"With the adoption of the Child Poverty Reduction Act, New York State is saying that children's well-being matters-- and taking the first step toward changing the trajectory for a whole generation," said [Timothy Hathaway, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse New York](#). "We know that poverty negatively impacts a child's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. Reducing poverty pays dividends for all New Yorkers by strengthening families, reducing risk of abuse and neglect for children, and ultimately making our communities throughout the state better places to work and live."

"The New York Immigration Coalition thanks Governor Hochul for signing the Child Poverty Reduction Act into law today," said [Liza Schwartzwald, Senior Manager of Education Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition](#). "Immigrant children make up 41% of all children in New York State living in low-income families. This legislation marks a critical leap forward in the state's fight to assist the families most in need, and we're grateful to Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Ramos for supporting it in the Legislature. We look forward to building on this work to ensure that all children in New York State can thrive."

"The New York State Council of Churches commends Governor Kathy Hochul for signing into law the Child Poverty Reduction Act," said [Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches](#). The Act names as a target for New York to cut child poverty in half within ten years. It also includes the requirement that data driven proposals for child poverty reduction come before the legislature on an annual basis shepherded under the auspices of a state recognized council which will be made up of child advocates and service providers. Our state and country are woefully behind other countries in the ways in which we care for our children. We need far more thoughtful and robust responses to the child poverty crisis. We are very hopeful that this Act will help us take a powerful step in the right direction by offering the tools and framework we need to effectively care for our young people in every part of our state."

The Children's Defense Fund-New York (CDF-NY) has a unique approach to improving conditions for children, combining research, public education, policy development, direct services, and advocacy. A recognized authority in the endeavor to protect New York children and strengthen their families, CDF-NY serves as a resource and partner for children, families and organizations throughout New York State.