

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



2nd Report of
**House Speaker Christopher Donovan's
Task Force on Children in the Recession**

Submitted May 2011

Representative Diana Urban and Senator Terry Gerratana
Task Force Co-chairs



Download this report and other Task Force materials at:
www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm

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OVERVIEW

On June 16, 2009, Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan announced the formation of a legislative task force to find ways of helping Connecticut's youngest citizen's deal with the impact of the current recession. This made Connecticut the first state in the nation to undertake such an effort. Representatives Karen Jarmoc and Diana Urban were named co-chairs. For the remaining membership of the Task Force, the Speaker appointed not only state legislators but staffers from each of Connecticut's U.S. Senate and Congressional offices, along with representatives of social-service agencies.

The panel began its work by hearing from national experts about the cost of recessions historically and the projected costs of this one. By mid-December 2009, it had heard approximately 10 hours' worth of presentations and testimony, over three meetings and a public hearing. The latter was held in Hartford for residents of the 1st Congressional District. For more on those activities, see the Task Force's 1st Quarterly Report, available on the Connecticut Commission on Children website, at www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm.

This report concerns the Task Force's activity from January 2010 to April 2011. The primary focus of this period was a series public hearings held across the state, following a pattern set with the Hartford hearing. To ensure geographic balance, the panel held at least one hearing in each of the state's five Congressional districts; to ensure a diversity of viewpoints, it chose communities of varying sizes, wealth, and racial demographics. The hearings were held as follows:

Saturday, January 23:	Asnuntuck Community College, Enfield
Saturday, February 6:	Bridgeport City Hall Annex, Bridgeport
Saturday, February 13:	Killingly Town Hall, Danielson
Tuesday, February 16:	Vogel Wetmore School, Torrington
Thursday, February 18:	William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, Hamden
Friday, April 9:	United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, Ledyard

The Task Force circulated flyers for each of these hearings to encourage attendance. (They are reprinted in Appendix 1, at the end of this report.) The testimony gathered at

these hearings inspired the drafting of House Bill 5360, An Act Concerning Children in the Recession.

In between the two votes came a visit to the Capitol by Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund. Ms. Edelman, whose work as a child advocate and civil-rights leader won her the Presidential Medal of Freedom and many other honors, praised the work of the taskforce in a speech before legislators and other guests. She also urged passage of House Bill 5360.

The rest of this report addresses in detail the public hearings, the bill, Ms. Edelman’s visit, and what the Task Force has learned about the recession’s impact since the bill became law.

WHAT EMERGED FROM THE HEARINGS

At each of the public hearings held early in 2010, the Task Force wanted to hear Connecticut families explain in their own words how the recession was affecting them. What impact was it having on their ability to feed and clothe their children? Was it pushing college education out of reach? Was it causing psychological stress within the family? Just as important, the Task Force also wanted to know what state government could do to ease the impact of the recession.

To varying extents, those who came forward to testify had to overcome palpable feelings of embarrassment, defeat, and confusion – an indicator of just how desperate they’d become. Each person had unique circumstances, but as they told their stories, certain refrains emerged, especially despair over not knowing where to turn for help or—in cases where they’d turned to the government for help—not always finding it.

Here are some of those stories:

Sheek, a mother from Hamden, testified that she’d been laid off in January 2009, two months after her daughter’s father lost his job. Just feeding and clothing her daughter had become a daily struggle. “I do not qualify for food stamps,” she said,

“because my vehicle places me over the limit allowed for personal assets.” Yet she needed her car to commute to school and look for a job. She said she wasn’t sure what to do next.

Rhonda, a homeless mother of three (pictured below), testified at the Bridgeport hearing that her daughter wants to go to college. But she cannot afford even the



application fees charged by the most inexpensive schools -- \$30 to \$40. “I do not have that type of money,” she tearfully told the Task Force. “Now I’m being evicted from my home, I have nowhere to go.” She went on to recall asking for help from social-service providers and having to answer their questions. “They said, ‘Maybe we can help you.’ Do I have a drug problem? No. Do I have an alcohol problem? No. Do I have a mental problem? No. They said if did not have a mental

problem, an alcohol problem, or a drug problem, then we cannot help you at this time.” Fighting back tears, she told the Task Force: “Right now, you do not know how bad I want to use drugs just to help my family.”

Tara, a foster parent from Torrington, (pictured at right) said being a foster parent has never been easy, but it has become especially difficult in these times. “We’re not immune to the recession,” she said, adding that for some, the economic strain has become too much,



since state law requires them to show they have enough income to support their children. “There are cases where foster families ... have lost hours, had income cut, and are faced with the heart-wrenching decision of having to make that call, saying, ‘You need to remove that child from our home.’”

Heather, a Waterbury resident, told of having to take on two part-time jobs after her husband was laid off from his job. They weren’t enough, she said. “After a 36-hour week, I was lucky if my take-home pay for both jobs added up to \$250 a week.” Her 10-year-old daughter still wonders whether her parents can the rent. “Children should not have to worry about things like that,” she told the Task Force.

Mario Saccoccio of Enfield said he Alison are raising a 22-month-old grandson. As a self-employed home improvement contractor, Mario is among those dealing with the worst downturn in the housing industry in decades. Alison has wanted to help by working full-time as an accountant, but someone has to stay home with their grandson. “As grandparents raising a grandchild, we believe that we are the forgotten partners in the state’s child welfare system,” Mario said. “Although some of our needs are similar to those shared by those families in the foster care system, our ages and income place us in a unique position.” Quality day care is usually offered only for full-time placement, and is scaled to income guidelines, he said; "gross Income" is different for us than for those not self-employed.



Rick Littlejohn, a single parent in New Haven, (pictured left) had three heart attacks and ended up unemployed. He fell into the shelter system. “I used to be a homeowner,” he told the Task Force. “I used to have the car, the dog in the backyard, all of that.” Now he has trouble explaining his situation to his son. “My son is 12 years old, a very crucial age for a young black

man ... He’s right on the fence...And he’s gotta eat, and Daddy’s not in a position [to help], because Daddy’s unemployed.”

THE INPUT OF NONPROFITS

In each community it visited, the Task Force also heard or received testimony from local nonprofit service organizations that deal every day with the fallout of the economic crisis—unemployment, homelessness, hunger, and family stress. Though each community is experiencing the downturn slightly differently, some themes emerged in the nonprofits' testimony.

Without exception, nonprofit organizations said they're seeing an unprecedented demand for their services. Linda K. Bridges, executive director of the Enfield Food Shelf, testified that as of January 2010, 34 families had registered for food assistance from her organization – all but one of them for the first time. Of the 2,414 people registered for assistance, she added, nearly half – 1,005 – were children.

Mystic Area Shelter and Hospitality Inc. (MASH), which provides shelter for homeless families with children in southeastern Connecticut, reported the following in written testimony: “We have seen a marked increase in the number of calls we receive daily inquiring about available shelter space. These calls come from the heads of homeless families, state agencies, and other nonprofits. Sadly, our response is often: ‘We are full.’ In the last several months, we have seldom had a shelter unit open for more than a day. Most often, one family leaves early in the day, [with] another coming in by nightfall.”

Without adequate funding of these nonprofits, the direct costs to the state of assisting the unemployed or underemployed families would be much greater. For instance, Amelia Parcinski of the Plainfield Family Resource testified at the Killingly hearing that she works with five pregnant girls in their schools and in their homes, helping them to get through their pregnancies, stay connected with their families, learn what their babies will need to grow into health adults, and develop plans for moving their lives forward after the births of their children. Without such help, she said, the mothers and their children would be putting a much greater demand on state resources, for much longer periods.

Similarly, Danielle DaSilva, program manager for the Nurturing Families Program at Day Kimball Hospital, testified in Killingly that her program – then faced with a

proposed 30 percent cut in state funding – was the lead prevention program in the northeast corner of the state, where Connecticut’s child abuse rate is the highest. Serving a family in her program costs the state about \$3,000 annually, she said. By contrast, it costs the Department of Children and Families about \$30,000 a year to pursue a substantiated child-abuse claim, while it costs the Department of Correction about \$44,000 annually to house an inmate. “It pays to offer prevention services,” DaSilva said.

Many needy families simply aren’t getting the services they need. Barbara Edinberg, assistant director of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, testified that her organization surveyed more than 2,000 Bridgeport families in the first four months of 2009 and found that most of those dealing with unemployment were receiving no assistance. “Despite losing their jobs and struggling to pay bills, the vast majority of those who were not working—62%--weren’t receiving any safety-net services, such as HUSKY, housing assistance or food stamps,” she said. “Compared to the numbers of unemployed, the safety net is serving only a fraction of the people who need it.” (She also noted that while the official unemployment rate in Bridgeport at this time was 12.7 percent, this did not take into account those who’d given up looking for work or were underemployed; her group’s survey found that 30 percent of families were contending with layoffs or only part-time work.)

Claire Hall, executive director of Educational Resources for Children (ERfC), a nonprofit agency that helps the Enfield Public Schools provide after-school programs to elementary- and secondary-school children, testified that her group has worked with a local soup kitchen, Enfield Loaves and Fishes, to provide 30,000 snacks to kids after school. But even that’s not enough to stave off hunger, she said: “For many of our students, we know this is the last meal of the day.”

The stress parents feel from the poor economy is creating a cascade of problems in their children’s lives. Kathy Schiessl, division director of Community Health Resources, a provider of support, treatment, and prevention programs for children with behavioral health issues in the Enfield area, wrote: “A lot of the families we see are struggling so much financially that they cannot focus on what needs to be done to help their own family. Parents have to take low-paying jobs with odd hours to

make ends meet ... the children suffer and they aren't provided the consistency and structure that they need to develop appropriately."

The cascade reaches into the classroom, Schiessl said, because money-strapped schools have had to cut back on help for kids with behavioral problems. "As a result, the kids do poorly, begin to act out, and in turn create additional stress for their teacher, the rest of the class, and their family."

Nonprofit providers who testified offered some ideas for helping Connecticut's needy families. Among them:

- There needs to be a simple, user-friendly way for families to get help when they need it; instead of having to run a bureaucratic gauntlet, they should be able to apply for whatever forms of assistance they need simultaneously, in centralized locations.
- Waive driver's licensing and registration fees, along with bus fare, for the unemployed, on the premise that people without cars or access to public transportation find it virtually impossible to get and hold jobs.
- Create more family resource centers (FRCs), where adults can pursue high school equivalency diplomas while leaving their children in free or low-cost child care.
- Plan for the recovery. Specifically, invest in programs like early child care that will ensure parents and their children are ready when the economy turns around.

An Act Concerning Children in the Recession



House Speaker Christopher Donovan (holding paper), Task Force members, and children look on as Governor Rell signs An Act Concerning Children in the Recession (Public Act 10-133).

As the public hearings continued, the legislature began consideration of House Bill 5360, An Act Concerning Children in the Recession. The bill, which drew heavily on the public-hearing testimony and other information gathered to date by the Task Force, called for taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of children harmed by the recession—something no other state had yet done. In its final form, the bill contained three chief requirements:

1. That whenever the state unemployment rate reached 8 percent or higher, a leadership team from across state agencies would meet regularly to create a unified government response to such matters as hunger and homelessness.

2. That state agencies develop a single, streamlined application process for services like food stamps, child-care, unemployment benefits, and medical assistance and insurance. The aim: to both improve the delivery of services to the families who need them and make state government more efficient and cost-effective.
3. That state agencies do everything possible to secure the federal dollars available to assist Connecticut families facing unemployment, homelessness, or similar recession-related crises.

The bill also called for:

- Allowing parents who receive TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) to attend two- or four-year degree programs as one of the program's acceptable work activities, increasing their future productivity.
- Prohibiting the Department of Social Services from closing the Care4Kids child-care assistance program without 30 days advance notice.
- Ensuring essential services for families who've become homeless or on the verge of it.
- Greater focus in state government on reducing (a) the number of low birth-weight babies, (b) homeless children and families, and (c) food insecurity.

The House of Representatives voted 137-7 for the bill on April 27; the Senate approved it unanimously on May 5. Governor M. Jodi Rell signed the bill into law on June 8.

Because the legislation made Connecticut the first state to specifically address the needs of children and families left in crisis by the recession, Speaker Donovan and Representative Urban were asked to give a presentation on it at the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) Legislative Summit in Louisville, Kentucky on July 27, 2010. There, legislators and policy leaders from around the nation learned of the Task Force's efforts.

THE VISIT OF MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

On April 30, 2010 – soon after the House of Representatives approved the legislation, but just before the Senate voted – the state Capitol was visited at the request of the Task Force by Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund. Ms. Edelman, whose honors as a child advocate and civil-rights leader include the Presidential Medal of Freedom, told a room packed with lawmakers, Task Force members, child advocates, and other guests that she looked forward to the final approval of Connecticut’s bill because she planned to “tell everybody else to do likewise.”

“We’re going to take what you’ve done to other states,” she said, adding that she was especially moved by some of the hearing testimony collected by the Task Force. “I’m so grateful that you went out there and began to try to make visible our most invisible constituents,” she said.



Marian Wright Edelman at the Capitol, flanked by the co-chairs of the Task Force, Reps. Diana Urban (left) and Karen Jarmoc.

Ms. Edelman pointed out that the benefits of the legislation would continue after the recession. “What’s good for children in recession is also good for children *not* in recession,” she said.

But also noted how far all states have to go in ensuring the health, safety, and education of their children. She recalled the words of German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose resistance to Hitler in World War II cost him his life. “He believed that the test of the morality of a society is how it treats its children,” Ms Edelman said. “And despite all

of the good progress we have made ... the United States is still flunking Bonhoeffer's test every hour of every day."

Ms. Edelman's visit was made possible by generous funding from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving.

CONTINUED COLLECTION OF DATA

Since the enactment of Public Act 10-133, the staff of the Commission on Children has continued to monitor other government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the news media for indications of how Connecticut children and their families are faring in the continued downturn. While anecdotal, the evidence points to continued strain on nearly all families, but especially those who were most economically vulnerable before the recession:

- Though State Labor Department officials say some indicators point to an improved Connecticut economy over the past 12 months, the state's unemployment rate remains stubbornly high, even increasing to 9.1 percent in March, which is above the national rate of 8.8 percent.
<http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/laborsit.pdf>
- The number of state residents receiving food assistance grew by 30 percent from the 2009 to 2010 fiscal years, to more than 336,000 people. At the same time, the federal government has found that Connecticut does a very poor job of ensuring all eligible residents get assistance; in fact, our state ranks among the worst in the nation in processing food stamp applications on time and paying out accurate levels of benefits. Administrators for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service delivered that news to the legislature's Human Services and Appropriations committees in February, and they warned that the state could face financial sanctions if it does not improve its performance. When federal officials looked at a sample of fiscal 2010 cases in which Connecticut residents were denied food stamps, they found that 26 percent of those denials were in error.

- In its annual survey of Connecticut emergency shelters, the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness found that the shelters served 11,700 people in 2010, including more than 1,500 children. The number of people in shelters and transitional programs at any given point in time increased 3% from 2009 to 2010, while shelter bed usage exceeded 100% during all of 2010 and much of 2009. The Coalition also noted that the 2010 count “revealed a startling number of people becoming homeless for the first time. Almost half of all families and 40% of single adults in shelters reported that this was their first homeless experience.” (Report available at http://www.cceh.org/pdf/portraits_full.pdf.)
- The suburbs are now home to one-third of the nation's poor, according to the Brookings Institution, which predicts the percentage will continue to increase in coming years. Brookings also finds that the social-service networks in the suburbs are stretched too thin to adequately clothe and feed their newly poor.
- The U.S. Department of Labor reported in March that Connecticut has the third-highest unemployment rate in the nation for Hispanics: 17.7 percent. Only Rhode Island, with 21.8 percent unemployment, and Nevada, at 18.6 percent, have higher rates. Nationally, Hispanic unemployment last year averaged 12.5 percent, compared with a rate of 8.7 percent for whites and 16 percent for blacks. The DOL report, entitled “The Hispanic Labor Force in the Recovery,” cited two possible factors for Hispanics’ higher-than-average jobless rates: lower educational attainment and a higher proportion of the workforce being employed in the private sector. (Report available at: <http://www.dol.gov/Sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/>)
- The President's Council of Economic Advisers concluded in a study late last year that some 4 million Americans will lose their unemployment benefits in 2011, with no jobs in sight. That’s despite Congress’ unprecedented extension of their benefits in 2009 to 99 weeks—a situation that led to their being dubbed “99’ers.” According to the Council’s study, 40 percent of the long-term unemployed are the sole source of income in their households. Income in those homes will fall at least 90 percent when the benefits expire.

- At the start of 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture projected that the Consumer Price Index for food would rise 3 to 4 percent for the year. Yet actual prices have risen so rapidly that the agency already is revising its numbers. For instance, the USDA originally predicted that retail beef prices would increase 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent in 2011; now, it's pegging the increase at 7 to 8 percent. Economists blame the situation on rising energy prices (since food must be transported), a weakened dollar, and a growing demand for food worldwide. (ABC News, 4/46/11)
- Similarly, two of the country's biggest makers of diapers and wipes are raising their prices this spring. According to the Wall Street Journal, Kimberly-Clark Corp. plans to raise prices on its Huggies diapers and wipes by 3% to 7% while Procter & Gamble Co. has announced a 7% rise in prices for its Pampers diapers and 3% increase on wipes. (WSJ, 4/26/11)
- The rate of abusive head trauma to infants and young children has nearly doubled since the economy began collapsing in 2007, a national study indicates. Researchers looked at the number of abuse cases in four U.S. hospitals, in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Seattle and Columbus, Ohio. They found increases in every city. "Abusive head trauma -- previously known as 'shaken baby syndrome' -- is the leading cause of death from child abuse, if you don't count neglect," study author Dr. Rachel P. Berger, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, told the Health Day news service. "And so, what's concerning here is that we saw in four cities that there was a marked increase in the rate of abusive head trauma among children during the recession compared with beforehand." (May 1, 2010)

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP, 2010-2011

Representative Diana Urban, co-chair
Senator Terry Gerratana, co-chair (2011)
Representative Karen Jarmoc, co-chair
(2009-10)

Senator Eric D. Coleman
Senator Paul Doyle
Senator Jonathan Harris (2009-2010)
Senator Robert Kane
Senator Edward Meyer
Senator Anthony Musto
Senator Edith Prague
Representative Catherine F. Abercrombie
Representative Jason Bartlett (2009-2010)
Representative Michelle Cook
Representative Mae Flexer
Representative Gail Hamm
Representative DebraLee Hovey
Representative Marie Lopez Kirkley–Bey
Representative Barbara Lambert (2009-10)
Representative Chris Lyddy
Representative Patricia Billie Miller
Representative Kevin Ryan
Representative Toni E. Walker

Elaine Werner
U.S. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman's staff

Lee Reynolds
U.S. Senator Christopher J. Dodd's staff (2009-10)

Joseph Rodriguez
U.S. Senator Richard M. Blumenthal's staff (2011)

Eva Bunnell
Congressman John B. Larson's staff

Karen Weseliza
Congressman Joseph Courtney's staff

Jill Deloma
Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro's staff

Amy Lappos
Congressman James Himes's staff

Hilda Santiago
Congressman Christopher Murphy's staff

Maggie Adair
Connecticut Association for Human Services

Jamey Bell
Connecticut Voices for Children

Maureen Brennan
Enfield Parents for Education

Annie Chittenden
CT SafePet

Susan B. Dunn
United Way of Central and Northeastern Conn.

David Fink
Partnership for Strong Communities

Jim Gatling
New Opportunities, Waterbury

Mark Masselli
Community Health Center Inc.

Jeanne Milstein
Connecticut Office of the Child Advocate

Maria Mojica
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Amy Morales
Alcorn Family Resource Center, Enfield

Lucy P. Nolan
End Hunger Connecticut!

David Radcliffe
Meriden Children's First

Erin Reig
Parent advocate

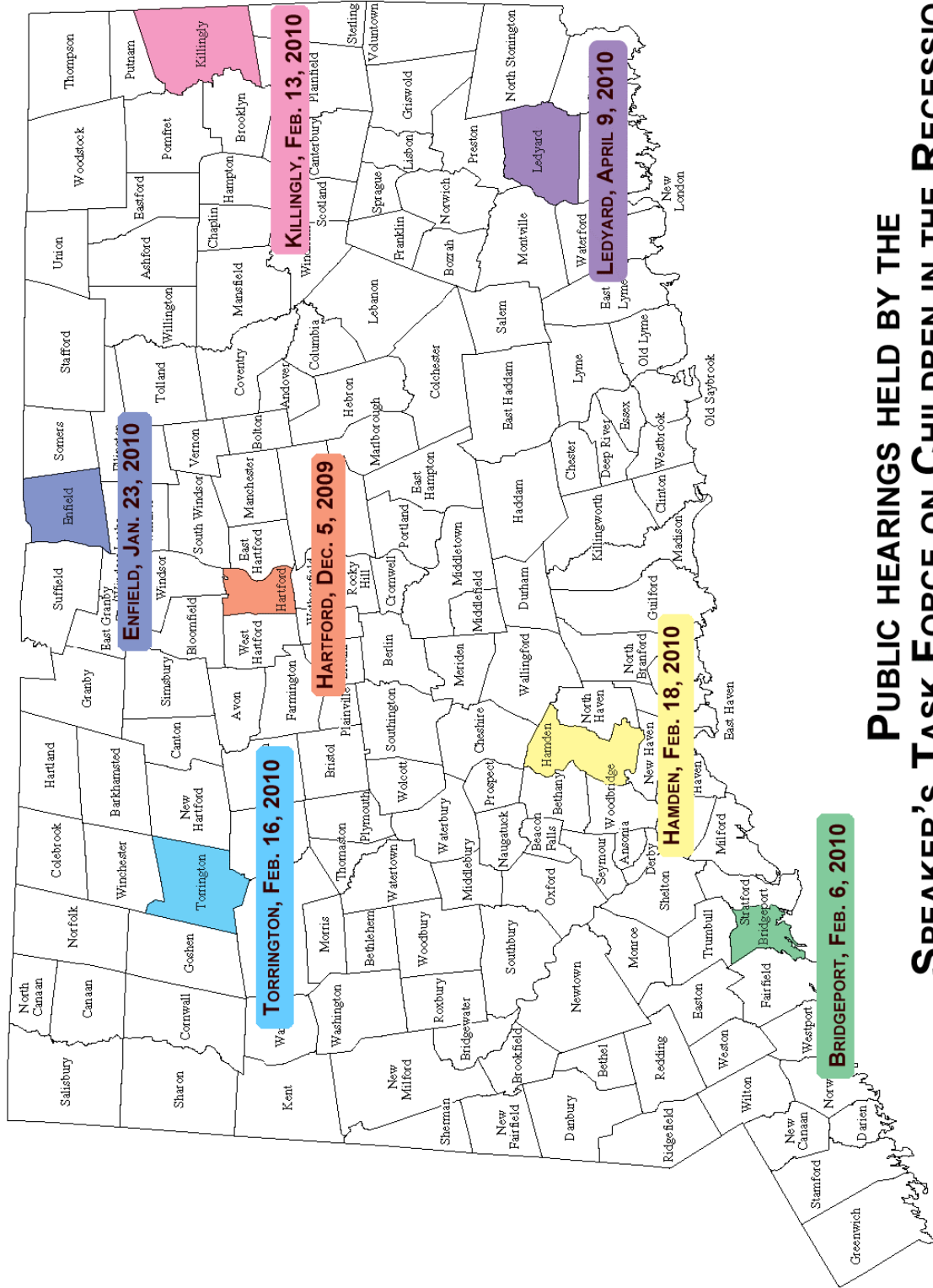
Michelle Edmonds-Sepulveda
City of New Haven

Erika Tindill (2009-2010)
Karen Jarmoc (2011)
Conn. Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Lynda Trebisacci
Parent advocate

Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children

**APPENDIX 1:
TASK FORCE PUBLIC HEARINGS**



**PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD BY THE
SPEAKER'S TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION**



How is the recession affecting your family?

- Are you able to put enough good food on the table?
- Are your children feeling the stress of tight finances?
- Is college tuition still within reach?
- Can your teenager find a job?
- Is government responding to your needs?

State legislators want to know!

Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession, co-chaired by Representatives Karen Jarmoc of Enfield and Diana Urban of North Stonington, in partnership with Congressman Joseph Courtney and Enfield KITE (Key Initiatives to Early Education), will hold a public hearing:

9-11 a.m., Saturday, January 23

Auditorium of Asnuntuck Community College
170 Elm Street, Enfield

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 2nd District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- Sign-up for testimony begins at 8:30 a.m.
- For directions and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cqa.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

*Please come if you live in one of these communities:

Andover	Coventry	Glastonbury	Lyme	Pomfret	Thompson
Ashford	Deep River	Griswold	Madison	Preston	Tolland
Bolton	Durham	Groton	Mansfield	Putnam	Union
Bozrah	East Haddam	Haddam	Marlborough	Salem	Vernon
Brooklyn	East Hampton	Hampton	Montville	Scotland	Voluntown
Canterbury	East Lyme	Hebron	New London	Somers	Waterford
Chaplin	Eastford	Killingly	North Stonington	Sprague	Westbrook
Chester	Ellington	Killingworth	Norwich	Stafford	Willington
Clinton	Enfield	Lebanon	Old Lyme	Sterling	Windham
Colchester	Essex	Ledyard	Old Saybrook	Stonington	Woodstock
Columbia	Franklin	Lisbon	Plainfield	Suffield	



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State legislators and your congressman want to know!

Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession co-chaired by Representatives Karen Jarmoc of Enfield and Diana Urban of North Stonington, in partnership with 4th District Congressman Jim Himes and state Senator Anthony Musto, co-chair of the legislature's Select Committee on Children, **will hold a public hearing:**

10 a.m.-Noon, Saturday, February 6

Bridgeport City Hall Annex, Conference Rooms A-C,
999 Broad Street, Bridgeport

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 4th District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- Sign-up for testimony begins at 9:30 a.m.
- For directions, rescheduling information in case of bad weather, and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cqa.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

***Please come if you live in one of these communities:**

Bridgeport
Darien
Easton

Fairfield
Greenwich
Monroe

New Canaan
Norwalk
Oxford

Redding
Ridgefield
Shelton

Stamford
Trumbull
Weston

Westport
Wilton



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Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession co-chaired by Representatives Karen Jarmoc of Enfield and Diana Urban of North Stonington, in partnership with 2nd District Congressman Joseph Courtney and state Representative Mae Flexer of Danielson will hold a public hearing:

10-11:30 a.m., Saturday, February 13
 Killingly Town Hall, 172 Main Street, Danielson

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 2nd District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- Sign-up for testimony begins at 9:30 a.m.
- For directions, rescheduling information in case of bad weather, and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

***Please come if you live in one of these communities:**

Andover	Colchester	Ellington	Hebron	Marlborough	Preston	Suffield	Windham
Ashford	Columbia	Enfield	Killingly	Montville	Putnam	Thompson	Woodstock
Bolton	Coventry	Essex	Killingworth	New London	Salem	Tolland	
Bozrah	Deep River	Franklin	Lebanon	N. Stonington	Scotland	Union	
Brooklyn	Durham	Glastonbury	Ledyard	Norwich	Somers	Vernon	
Canterbury	East Haddam	Griswold	Lisbon	Old Lyme	Sprague	Voluntown	
Chaplin	East Hampton	Groton	Lyme	Old Saybrook	Stafford	Waterford	
Chester	East Lyme	Haddam	Madison	Plainfield	Sterling	Westbrook	
Clinton	Eastford	Hampton	Mansfield	Pomfret	Stonington	Willington	



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Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession co-chaired by Representatives Karen Jarmoc of Enfield and Diana Urban of North Stonington, in partnership with 5th District Congressman Chris Murphy and state Representative Michelle Cook of Torrington will hold a public hearing:

6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, February 16

Vogel Wetmore School, 68 Church Street, Torrington

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 5th District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- Sign-up for testimony begins at 5:30 p.m.
- For directions, rescheduling information in case of bad weather, and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

***Please come if you live in one of these communities:**

Avon	Canton	Kent	New Milford	Salisbury	Warren
Bethel	Cheshire	Litchfield	Newtown	Sharon	Washington
Bethlehem	Cornwall	Meriden	Norfolk	Sherman	Waterbury
Bridgewater	Danbury	Middlebury	North Canaan	Simsbury	Watertown
Brookfield	Farmington	Morris	Plainville	Southbury	Wolcott
Burlington	Goshen	New Britain	Plymouth	Thomaston	Woodbury
Canaan	Harwinton	New Fairfield	Roxbury	Torrington	



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- Are you able to put enough good food on the table?
- Are your children feeling the stress of tight finances?
- Is college tuition still within reach?
- Can your teenager find a job?
- Is government responding to your needs?

State legislators and your congressman want to know!

Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession co-chaired by Representatives Karen Jarmoc of Enfield and Diana Urban of North Stonington, in partnership with 3rd District Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro will hold a public hearing:

7-8:30 p.m., Thursday, February 18

William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

One Hamden Center, 2319 Whitney Avenue, Suite 2B, Hamden

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 3rd District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- Sign-up for testimony begins at 6:30 p.m.
- For directions, rescheduling information in case of bad weather, and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cqa.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

***Please come if you live in one of these communities:**

Ansonia
Beacon Falls
Bethany
Branford
Derby

Durham
East Haven
Guilford
Hamden
Middlefield

Middletown
Milford
Naugatuck
New Haven
North Branford

North Haven
Orange
Prospect
Seymour
Shelton

Stratford
Wallingford
Waterbury
West Haven
Woodbridge



How is the recession affecting your family?

- Are you able to put enough good food on the table?
- Are your children feeling the stress of tight finances?
- Is college tuition still within reach?
- Can your teenager find a job?
- Is government responding to your needs?

State legislators want to know!

Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession co-chaired by Reps. Diana Urban of North Stonington and Karen Jarmoc of Enfield, will hold a public hearing:

8-10 a.m., Friday, April 9th

**United Way of Southeastern Connecticut
283 Stoddards Wharf Road
Gales Ferry section of Ledyard**

The input you provide will guide the Task Force in creating legislation to address children's needs. Hearings will be held in each of Connecticut's congressional districts; this one will be held for residents of the 2nd District.*

- Youth will get first priority in testimony. All testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- For directions, rescheduling information in case of bad weather, and more information on the Task Force, go to: www.cqa.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm or call (860) 240-8585 or (860) 240-8364.

***Please come if you live in one of these communities:**

Andover	Columbia	Essex	Lebanon	Norwich	Sprague
Ashford	Coventry	Franklin	Ledyard	Old Lyme	Stafford
Bolton	Deep River	Glastonbury	Lisbon	Old Saybrook	Sterling
Bozrah	Durham	Griswold	Lyme	Plainfield	Stonington
Brooklyn	East Haddam	Groton	Madison	Pomfret	Suffield
Canterbury	East Hampton	Haddam	Mansfield	Preston	Thompson
Chaplin	East Lyme	Hampton	Marlborough	Putnam	Tolland
Chester	Eastford	Hebron	Montville	Salem	Union
Clinton	Ellington	Killingly	New London	Scotland	Vernon
Colchester	Enfield	Killingworth	North Stonington	Somers	Voluntown

APPENDIX 2:
PUBLIC ACT 10-133



Substitute House Bill No. 5360

Public Act No. 10-133

AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Child Poverty and Prevention Council, established pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes, shall constitute the children in the recession leadership team to make recommendations for the state's emergency response to children affected by the recession. The council may establish a subcommittee to act for it under this section. For purposes of this section, the council or a subcommittee established under this subsection shall meet quarterly if the unemployment rate of the state, as reported by the Labor Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for the preceding three months.

(b) The council shall work in consultation with other government agencies to develop and promote policies, practices and procedures, within available appropriations, that (1) mitigate the long-term impact of economic recessions on children; (2) provide appropriate assistance and resources to families to minimize the number of children who enter poverty as a result of the recession; and (3) reduce human and fiscal costs of recessions, including foreclosures, child hunger, family violence, school failure, youth runaways, homelessness, child abuse and neglect.

(c) For purposes of this section, the council, within available appropriations, shall utilize strategies to mitigate the impact of the recession on children that include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) Resource information sharing and strategic planning to address emergency response to children in the recession; (2) training of pertinent personnel on the availability of services, access points and interventions across agencies, including child trauma treatment; (3) development of linkages between job training and education programs and services; (4) development and implementation of efforts to coordinate outreach and improve access to services, including the establishment of multiple enrollment sites where feasible; (5) reduction of current response times to clients for safety net programs, including, but not limited to, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, the National School Lunch Program and other federal child nutrition programs, the temporary family assistance program, the child care subsidy program, heating and rental assistance, eviction prevention services and free and reduced preschool meal programs; (6) identification of appropriate revisions to regulations and procedures to be streamlined to increase program access; (7) maximization of availability of targeted case management and intervention services; (8) assessment of the unique needs of

children of soldiers serving or returning from war or other military service; and (9) maximization of all federal funding opportunities.

(d) Not later than January 1, 2011, the council shall prepare a report on (1) the progress in implementing the provisions of this section; and (2) other government actions taken to reduce the impact of the recession on children and families. Such report shall be submitted to the select committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and human services.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social Services, in consultation with the Labor Department and the Departments of Education, Public Health and Children and Families, shall seek, within available appropriations, to promote efficiency, reduce costs and administrative error rates and simplify the application process for families eligible for benefits by streamlining and integrating public information and access to programs.

(b) For the purpose of subsection (a) of this section, the Department of Social Services shall develop, within available appropriations, a plan for a comprehensive state service approach that may include (1) the development and promotion of a single, simplified, on-line application and enrollment process for programs administered by the Department of Social Services that serve children or families; (2) the use of the Internet to develop and increase public access to on-line screening tools, benefit calculators and on-line applications that facilitate prompt access to programs administered by the Department of Social Services and benefit information; and (3) the promotion of access to direct assistance with application and enrollment processes through community-based organizations. Not later than January 31, 2011, the department shall submit the plan to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and to the select committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children. The department may consult with and accept donations from philanthropic organizations to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(c) The Department of Social Services shall develop, in accordance with the provisions of federal law, a client-friendly application process which shall not require applications to be resubmitted if a family applied for services and, not more than thirty days after the date the application was submitted, the family experienced a change in circumstances or the program closed to intake applications and then reopened.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Social Services shall provide timely public notice if, for any reason, the child care subsidy program closes intake. The department shall notify the public if the program eligibility or status has been altered. Any change in eligibility or program terms, except opening of the program or expansion in eligibility, shall be effective not less than thirty days after public notice of such change.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social Services, in consultation with appropriate state agencies and within available appropriations, shall (1) allocate existing funding and resources to ensure the availability of homeless shelters that accept intact families

or that assist families to find adequate alternative arrangements that allow the family to remain together; (2) review program eligibility requirements and other policies to ensure that unaccompanied homeless children have access, to the fullest extent practicable, to critical services that such children might otherwise have been prevented from receiving due to age or guardianship requirements; and (3) work, in accordance with state and federal law, to seek relief from income garnishment orders through the appropriate judicial authority if it is deemed appropriate to be in the best interests of children and families.

(b) The Department of Education, in consultation with appropriate departments, shall seek full utilization of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to protect children falling into homelessness from school failure and dropping out of school and to improve access to higher education.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Departments of Social Services, Public Health and Education shall collaborate to decrease hunger resulting from the recession by coordinating, within available appropriations, state-wide public access, information and outreach, and promoting, within available appropriations, cross-referral and collocation of entry points and application processes for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, child nutrition programs and the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children and increase federal reimbursements.

Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) The Department of Education shall administer, within available appropriations, a child nutrition outreach program to increase (1) participation in the federal School Breakfast Program, federal Summer Food Service Program and federal Child and Adult Care Food Program; and (2) federal reimbursement for such programs.

(b) The child nutrition outreach program shall:

(1) Encourage schools to (A) participate in the federal School Breakfast Program; (B) employ innovative breakfast service methods where students eat their breakfast in their classrooms or elsewhere after school starts, rather than only before school and only in the cafeteria; and (C) apply to the in-classroom breakfast grant program pursuant to section 10-215g of the general statutes;

(2) (A) Encourage local and regional school districts to sponsor Summer Food Service Program sites; (B) recruit other sponsors of such sites; and (C) make grants to site sponsors to assist them in increasing child participation;

(3) Encourage day care centers to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; and

(4) Publicize the availability of federally-funded child nutrition programs throughout the state.

Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall maximize federal fund opportunities from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund established pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act P. L. 111-5, in order to

assist families facing unemployment, housing crises, increasing debt, homelessness or other hardships. The department shall seek to utilize, in accordance with the provisions of federal law:

(1) The nonrecurrent, short-term benefits category of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes, including, but not limited to, housing, transportation, work expenses, family safety, low birth weight reduction, food and nutrition. The benefits funded pursuant to this subdivision may include, but not be limited to, mortgage assistance, eviction relief, car repair, work clothes, domestic violence services, home visitation and on-the-job training; and

(2) The subsidized employment category of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes, including, but not limited to, youth employment programs and the alleviation of specific labor shortages and state worker shortages where the jobs created help families apply for state services.

(b) The department shall work with the private sector, including philanthropic, business and nonprofit agencies as well as any consortium of such groups, for eligible purposes and as third-party participants to qualify for, access and maximize federal funding from said emergency fund through donation, in-kind spending and training of subsidized workers.

(c) The department shall implement the provisions of this section within available resources.

Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not more than sixty days after the effective date of this section, the Department of Social Services, within available appropriations and to the extent permitted by federal law, shall establish and implement a procedure for the following modification in the temporary assistance of needy families program whenever the state unemployment rate, as reported by the Labor Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for the preceding three months. The Jobs First program shall permit and encourage parents to pursue education and training and shall approve, as work activities, two- and four-year degree programs. A recipient shall be eligible for assistance under this modification for at least six months even if the state unemployment rate for subsequent quarters is not eight per cent or greater. The department may seek federal support to pay for such modifications through funds provided from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Public Health, within available appropriations and in consultation with the Departments of Social Services and Education, shall seek to reduce the incidence of low birth weight among infants and reduce the cost to the state from unnecessary hospitalizations of such infants by (1) maximizing enrollment in the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children and Medicaid for all eligible women; (2) encouraging tobacco cessation programs targeted to pregnant women; and (3) promoting the use of the centering pregnancy model of prenatal care. The department may recover the costs of implementing the provisions of this section through funds available from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund established under section 4-28f of the general statutes and the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

Sec. 10. (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children, in consultation with the private sector, shall research the viability of enacting a state children and the recession fund that would provide funds and low-interest loans to families facing short-term crisis in housing, utilities, hunger and unemployment. Not later than January 1, 2011, the commission shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, its findings to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies.

Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children shall coordinate information on youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community. The commission shall inform the General Assembly and the public of such opportunities.

Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) No cause of action or liability shall arise against the state, any of its agencies or subdivisions, or any state official, employee or agent, for failure to comply with the provisions of sections 1 to 9, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall submit a report on the policies and interventions promoted pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of this act, subsection (a) of section 4 of this act and sections 7 and 8 of this act. The report shall include key outcome indicators and measures and set benchmarks for evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of said sections. The department shall submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

(b) The Department of Education shall submit a report on the policies and interventions promoted pursuant to subsection (b) of section 4 and section 6 of this act. The report shall include key outcome indicators and measures and set benchmarks for evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of said sections. The department shall submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

(c) The Department of Public Health shall submit a report on the policies and interventions promoted pursuant to section 9 of this act. The report shall include key outcome indicators and measures and set benchmarks for evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of said section. The department shall submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Approved June 8, 2010

DISCLAIMER: This report relies on the data publicly available at the time of publication. The Task Force understands that the data is subject to change.