



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Commission on Children



## At a Glance:

### House Bill 5360, An Act Concerning Children in the Recession

HB 5360 would make Connecticut the first state in the nation to take a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of children harmed by the recession.

These are the most important provisions:

- Whenever the state unemployment rate reaches 8 percent or higher, a leadership team from across state agencies would be required to meet regularly to create a unified government response to such matters as hunger and homelessness.
- State agencies would have to develop a single, streamlined application process for services like food stamps, the Care4Kids child-care program, unemployment, and medical assistance and insurance. The aim is to both improve the delivery of services to the families who need them and make state government more efficient and cost-effective.
- State agencies would be required to do everything possible to secure the federal dollars available to them.

The bill would also:

- allow parents receiving 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.
- prohibit the Department of Social Services from closing the Care4Kids child-care assistance program without 30 days advance notice;
- ensure essential services for homeless families and those at risk of homelessness;
- call for greater focus on reducing (a) the number of low birth-weight babies, (b) homeless children and families, and (c) food insecurity.

(continued on reverse)

HB 5360 stems from the findings of the Speaker's Task Force on Children in the Recession, which House Speaker Christopher Donovan formed to find ways of meeting the needs of Connecticut's youngest and most vulnerable citizens in this economic crisis. The panel began its work by hearing some startling numbers from experts. Among them:

-- An estimated 35,000 Connecticut children will be thrown into poverty by the downturn. Their lost earnings and poorer health as adults will cost our economy up to \$800 million a year.

-- Rural and suburban homelessness saw a dramatic increase in 2009, especially among families and children in families; both were up 33%.

-- Connecticut is last in the nation when it comes to school participation in the national School Breakfast Program, with only 39 percent of eligible children eating breakfast in school.

At public hearings held across the state, the Task Force heard dozens of parents and youths talk about the burdens of recession, from the Waterbury mother who is working three jobs because of her husband's job loss to the Glastonbury teen-ager who tearfully told of having to put her college dreams on hold because both parents had been laid off.

**For more information, visit the Children in the Recession Task Force's home page, at [www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/taskforce.htm)**