



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



November 14, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Please join the Connecticut Commission on Children, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Tow Foundation to discuss the Social Health Index of 2008. The forum will take place on Thursday, November 20, 2008, from 1 to 3 p.m. in room 1-E of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

Economists, pediatricians, expert policy analysts, and appointed and elected leaders of both parties will discuss the Social Health Index findings. Trends and policy implications will be discussed against the backdrop of the current national economic decline.

Sarah Meadows of the Rand Corporation and Ken Land of Duke University performed the research. Ms. Meadows will present the methodology and findings. The 11 indicators, spanning age and issue, include employment, housing, health care, infant mortality, school performance and safety. The data is analyzed in trend lines over 30 years, 10 years, and five years. In addition, the trends are analyzed this year in a special section focused on youth.

Rather than an external report card on the state, this is a state document that shows the state looking at its own performance through objective analysis and a dedicated commitment to studying patterns in performance.

Connecticut is the only state in the nation to legislate and offer such an Index to its citizenry. Parallel to fiscal reporting, the findings convey Connecticut's annual performance and map trend lines. If we are to understand what shapes the quality of life in our state, regular monitoring of social performance is as important as regular monitoring of economic performance.

There are many issues of import in the document. We are improving significantly in infant mortality rates, a decline in teen pregnancy, and high school completion. Juvenile arrests for all crimes are down. We are faring poorly in unemployment, birth weight, affordable housing, and income variation. The proportion of personal income spent on health care is at its highest rate. Hate crimes increased by 28 per cent.

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This is a public private partnership, sponsored by the state and foundations. The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund has partnered with the state since the inception of this civic tool. The Tow Foundation has become a recent partner, as the Index looks extensively at youth issues.

Connecticut offers a civic tool to the public to enhance dialogue, public interest and the democratic process. Please join us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elaine J." followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Elaine Zimmerman
Executive Director
Connecticut Commission on Children