

Protect Kids by Supporting a Balanced Income Tax

Like many states, Illinois faces an unprecedented budget shortfall, and without new revenue, vital services such as child abuse prevention, child care, mental health and senior home care will be much harder to obtain or vanish altogether.

Illinois' income tax structure has failed to keep up with the state's growing needs. Our state is already falling behind in funding for public services like education, health care and public safety. Now we face a two-year budget shortfall of at least \$11.6 billion.

Closing the budget gap through cuts alone would decimate programs and devastate the families who rely on them. That's why the Child Abuse Council believes that generating new revenue through a modest income tax increase is the only responsible way to achieve a balanced budget solution that maintains basic services while ensuring the state can pay its bills.

- **Argument: We can't increase taxes before we reform government and strengthen ethics.**

Response: Yes, that work is very important – but we need to work on government reforms, accountability, and the budget at the same time; kids and families are hurting today and need your support. It isn't right to allow our budget problems to fall squarely on children and families, and to make them wait for our help – especially at a time they need it most. Waiting is not an option any longer.

- **Argument: Budget cuts and belt-tightening are necessary. We need to cut our budget first.**

Response: But our multibillion-dollar budget shortfall is so great, cuts alone cannot fill it. We need a balanced solution – one that involves not only cuts, but raising new revenues. The income tax is the fairest way to do that. Again, kids and families cannot afford to have services cut while discussions about cuts are taking place – they depend on these services *every day*.

- **Argument: This is the wrong time to raise taxes – during a recession.**

Response: It's certainly the wrong time to deeply cut or eliminate the services that kids and families need the most – such as preschool, child care, mental health and after-school programs. That's why a balanced solution calls for new revenues. An income tax increase is the fairest way to do that, tempered with fairness measures to protect struggling families from paying more – such as an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit. And leading economists say that, in a recession, tax increases are better than deep budget cuts that would take direct services away from struggling families.

Fixing the income tax is the fiscally responsible thing to do. If we cut important services now, we pay later...and at a significantly higher cost. The quality of life for our families and our community are at stake.

Please call your legislator TODAY and tell them to protect Illinois kids, families, jobs, and communities by supporting a balanced income tax. For more information, go to the Voices for Illinois Children website at www.voices4kids.org.

As always, thanks so much for your support.

Sue Swisher
Executive Director