

(<https://www.actforchildren.org/champion/join-movement/e-advocate>)

This Issue: 2019 Legislative Session Recap



On May 31, the Illinois General Assembly adjourned its regular legislative session after passing a bipartisan FY20 state budget (see below)! Additionally, several pieces of legislation, which our early childhood advocacy community had been advocating for, passed the General Assembly. You can read highlights below, but for more information, join IAFC for our Session Recap webinar on June 27! Register here (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4836772940602599948>).

Legislation Passed During the Session

- **Minimum Wage:** On February 19, Governor Pritzker signed into law a bill to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025. Illinois' wage floor will slowly increase up to that level, starting with a \$1 increase to \$9.25 per hour on January 1, 2020. This law will lift thousands of Illinois children and families out of poverty, while hopefully spurring increased economic activity and demand for early childhood services! In addition, IAFC will continue to advocate for increases to provider reimbursement rates to ensure that the early childhood workforce can compete with compensation in other industries.
- **Fair Tax:** Heading in to the 2019 legislative session, a major Illinois Action for Children advocacy priority was to help ensure that the state budget has the revenue base necessary in order to adequately invest in programs that support the health, financial security, and development of low-income children and families across Illinois. On May 27, the General Assembly took an important step towards this goal by approving a constitutional amendment to change the state's income tax structure from a flat tax, where every household pays the same rate regardless of income, to a progressive income tax, or fair tax, where the wealthiest households pay their fair share.

At the rates proposed by the Pritzker Administration, 97 percent of Illinoisans would pay the same or lower taxes - all while making sure the wealthy start to pay their fair share. Meanwhile this tax structure would raise \$3 billion per year for schools and other public services that our community needs. On May 30 these rates were approved by the General Assembly, and will be implemented if voters approve the switch to a progressive income tax. A referendum will now be put on the 2020 presidential ballot. It requires 60 percent of voters to approve it.

- **Rebuild Illinois:** For the first time in a decade, Illinois passed a comprehensive infrastructure and transportation improvement plan, known as Rebuild Illinois. This bipartisan capital plan will invest \$45 billion over the next six years into the state's schools, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. The funding comes from a number of new or increased taxes, including increases in the gas tax and taxes on cigarettes, as well as revenue from gaming expansion. Rebuild Illinois demonstrates the state's commitment to early childhood by investing \$100 million in the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) program - more than double the ECCG funding in the last capital bill in 2009. These capital grants can provide significant support to early childhood programs in their efforts to expand access in communities. Stay tuned for more information on the grantmaking process and opportunities for early childhood programs to apply.

FY 2020 State Budget Enacted

The Illinois General Assembly passed the state budget for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), which begins July 1, 2019. The final budget, which Governor Pritzker indicates he will sign into law, provides significant investments in the state's early childhood system, including:

- \$28.8 million increase to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- \$50 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)
- \$12 million increase to the Early Intervention (EI)
- Level funding for IDHS evidence-based home visiting programs
- \$100 million for the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) program

The General Assembly also voted to put the Fair Tax constitutional amendment on the 2020 ballot. Should the amendment be adopted, more than 97 percent of people will either pay the same or less in taxes, while the state increases revenue by \$3.4 billion to pay down our back log of bills and invest in programs like early childhood.

Illinois Action for Children applauds the General Assembly, its leaders, and the Governor for working together to develop a full-year, fully-funded budget that invests in critical supports for Illinois' youngest children and their families. We encourage you to call and thank your legislators as well!

For more detail on the FY 2020 state budget and additional, important early childhood bills approved by the legislature, click here (http://www.actforchildren.org/news_post/illinois-legislative-session-recap-state-budget-passed-fair-tax-news/). You can also join us for IAFC's Session Recap webinar on June 27! Sign up here (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4836772940602599948>).

Federal Proposed Administrative Rules Would Harm Children and Families

Restricting Eligibility to Housing Assistance for Immigrant Families

Under a new rule proposed on May 10 by the Trump administration, tens of thousands of children living in poverty across the country — all of them American citizens or legal residents — could lose their housing. The proposal would bar anyone from receiving federal housing assistance, like vouchers or public housing, if they share a home with an immigrant family member who's ineligible due to their immigration status.

Currently, families with mixed immigration status can receive housing assistance but have to pay higher rents to account for the fact that not everyone in the household is eligible. This proposed rule would therefore force people to decide between separating from their families and losing their homes. A recent New York Times story (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/16/nyregion/public-housing-immigration-trump.html>) highlights how this rule could affect one family. Additionally, the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) and National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) have officially launched a new website for public comments. Click here (<https://www.keep-families-together.org/>) to submit a public comment and learn more.

Proposed Change to Federal Poverty Level Measure



The Trump Administration has proposed to change how the Census Bureau's Official Poverty Measure (OPM) is adjusted annually for inflation. While this sounds like a highly technical change, it would do considerable harm. That is because the OPM is used to set the federal poverty line, which in turn is used to determine income eligibility for programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, child care, and Head Start. The Trump Administration is floating a proposal to use a lower annual adjustment, which would result in fewer and fewer people eligible and a larger and larger number of uninsured over time, relative to current law. Comments on this damaging proposal are due June

21, 2019 and can be submitted here (https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=OMB_FRDOC_0001-0248).

No Small Matter Screenings Coming to Chicago



“No Small Matter (<https://www.actforchildren.org/event/small-matter-chicago-screening-events/2019-06-21/>),” a compelling new film on the urgent need to invest in our youngest children, is coming to Chicago! “

“No Small Matter” screenings will run from Friday, June 21, through Thursday, June 27, at Gene Siskel Film Center (164 North State Street, Chicago, IL). Get your tickets today (<https://www.actforchildren.org/event/small-matter-chicago-screening-events/2019-06-21/>)!