



2006 State Budget Sustains Funding for Children and Families

As expected, the budget debate this year was long, intense, and very polarized. In January, Governor Napolitano proposed a pragmatic budget that targeted Arizona's growing revenues to meet the critical needs of a growing population. A majority of the state legislature - divided along party lines - rejected her proposal and voted for a budget in March that had flat funding for many children's services.

FIRST LEGISLATIVE BUDGET HURT KIDS AND FAMILIES

The most recent census data shows that Arizona continues to have the second fastest growing population of both school-age children and children younger than five. With this dynamic growth, flat funding would clearly mean Child Protective Services staff with too many cases and too few services to protect abused and neglected children, qualified working parents turned away from help paying for child care, and juvenile offenders going without the help they need before they return to our communities.

The budget passed by the legislature also included new restrictions on child care subsidies, AHCCCS health coverage, and school lunches. All of these restrictions would add bureaucracy, fuel higher administrative costs for the state, limit the federal funds available for Arizona, and threaten children's health and safety.

The Governor quickly vetoed all 16 budget bills, saying that "...the legislature's budget is balanced on the backs of Arizona children through per capita reductions in childcare, child protective services, children's services, and juvenile corrections."

FINAL BUDGET RECOGNIZES ARIZONA'S GROWTH

After the vetoes, Governor Janet Napolitano, Speaker of the House, Jim Weiers, and President of the Senate, Ken Bennett, spent weeks in budget discussions and negotiations. The resulting budget that was passed by the

legislature and signed by the Governor avoids major new restrictions and big steps backwards and provides moderate spending increases to address both growing numbers of children and critical needs. To preserve vital supports for kids and families, this budget restores close to \$50 million in total funds that had been cut in the March budget.

The budget for 2006 includes:

- Authority for the Department of Economic Security to spend more federal dollars to provide qualified, low-income, working parents with help paying for child care. It is expected that no qualified parents will have to be turned away next year due to budget shortfalls.

- An additional \$30 million in state general funds to protect abused and neglected children and address the dramatic growth in the number of children in foster care. This includes a rate increase for foster and adoptive parents, services for more families, and additional CPS staff to reduce caseloads.

- An additional \$6.7 million in state general funds to the Department of Juvenile Corrections to improve conditions and services for youth. This funding will help respond to the finding by the U.S. Department of Justice that Arizona's juvenile facilities were unsafe and were violating the rights of youth.

- An additional \$21 million in state general funds to expand state-funded full-day Kindergarten, reaching an estimated 10,000 more children in 128 schools.

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THIS I BELIEVE



Claire and Jack Simon, my immigrant parents, worked hard all their lives but never had much money. They managed to graduate from public high school. (My father graduated from Boston English High—the oldest public high school in the nation.) My father's brother, my Uncle Izzie, went to college on the GI bill becoming the only college graduate of that generation.

My father was a Boston cabbie and my mother was a saleswoman at Jordan Marsh Department Store in downtown Boston.

We couldn't afford a lot of books at home, but I had a library card from the Mattapan Public Library from the time I was five years old and I went to good public schools. Every single summer in my youngest years, while my parents worked, I went to a day camp run by the city.

I am a first generation native born American and heir to Eleanor Roosevelt's statement that government has only one purpose—to make life better for all of the people.

The current political and ideological battles in our state and across the country over whether – not to what extent, but whether government should have a role in the well-being of all of its citizens, both saddens and angers me.

It saddens me because the results of this battle are corrupting “the American dream.” In the words of the Wall Street Journal (May 13, 2005), “...despite the widespread belief that the U.S. remains a more mobile society than Europe, economists and sociologists say that in recent decades the typical child starting out in poverty in continental Europe (or in Canada) has had a better chance at prosperity.”

And this battle enrages me because of the young lives unnecessarily lost and damaged because we refuse to invest sufficient public resources into dramatically improving our public school system, our early care and education services, our adoption and foster care programs, and youth development opportunities.

There has essentially developed two ways to look at the world; two different stories about the kind of state and nation we want our kids to inherit.

In the first story, we are obligated only to our own gene pool, our own kids and families. In the second story we are connected as members of a community. In the first story we are all privatized. In the second, we are bound together.

National Public Radio has begun a series called “This I Believe” that invites Americans to write about the core beliefs that guide their lives. The series is based on a 1950s radio program of the same name hosted by radio pioneer Edward R. Murrow.

For whatever it's worth this is what I believe:

I believe that in the richest nation on the face of the earth every child should have a loving home that meets her basic needs for health care, food, shelter, safe and

nurturing child care, and quality education.

I believe that this country was built on the premise that we the people are stronger when we do something together and when we share responsibility for “other people's children.”

And I believe that we need to encourage people to run for public office who understand that we have a moral obligation to each other and a vested interest in the well-being of all of our citizens.

With a little help from public investments, my parents and millions and millions like them were able to provide their children with the opportunity to live the American dream. It is up to all of you, readers of the CAA newsletter who care about kids and families, not to give the dream away. It belongs to all of us.

Carol Kamin is President/CEO of Children's Action Alliance.

Going Beyond the Immigration Hype: Children and Our Shared Destiny

Children's Action Alliance, Arizona State University, and the Arizona Interfaith Network brought together policymakers, community organizations, and citizen leaders for a luncheon symposium on immigration and Arizona children June 28 at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel.

State policy toward immigrants is a controversial issue in Arizona. Much of the public debate has focused on deterring illegal immigration and restricting access to services for both legal and illegal immigrants. But the dramatic and long-lasting impact of various policies on children growing up in Arizona has been largely ignored.

More than nine out of ten young children of immigrants are U.S. citizens. Their future success as students, working adults, and contributing citizens will be shaped by their childhood experiences. State policies, such as Proposition 200, can have far-reaching effects that go beyond the legal parameters. The symposium explored those effects and examined what we can do to help Arizona children grow up with security, education, and health care.

Featured speakers included Michael Fix, Vice President of the Migration Policy Institute; the Honorable Terry Goddard, Arizona Attorney General; and Raul Yzaguirre, Presidential Professor of Practice in Community Development and Civil Rights at Arizona State University.

For more information, contact Kim VanPelt at 602-266-0707 or kvanpelt@azchildren.org.

Charles Blanchard



Charles Blanchard comes to the Children's Action Alliance Board of Directors with an impressive history of public and private service. Chuck recently rejoined Perkins Coie Brown & Bain after a distinguished career in government service, which included serving as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, General Counsel for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and General Counsel of the U.S. Army. Closer to home, Chuck served two terms in the Arizona Senate in the early 1990s, where he chaired the Judiciary Committee and was Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee. He was selected as the top-rated Senator in the 1992 Arizona Republic survey. In 2003, he served as the Interim Director of the Arizona Office of Homeland Security.

Chuck was elected to partnership at Brown and Bain in 1995. His practice areas include litigation for high-tech companies, antitrust counseling, patent litigation, and government procurement. Chuck has his Masters of Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and his juris doctorate from Harvard Law School.

As a new member of CAA's Board, Chuck brings his talent, experience, and leadership to the policy challenges facing Arizona's children and families. Chuck will chair CAA's new advisory committee on juvenile justice issues.

CAA Welcomes New Staff

Amy Barnes joined CAA as Administrative Assistant in February. Previously, Amy worked as the volunteer and data base coordinator with the YWCA of Maricopa County. As a realtor with Coldwell Banker, she was recipient of The Best of the Best award for achieving in the top 15% of sales for agents in the U.S. She has also worked in commercial insurance and Workers' Compensation. Amy holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Michigan. She brings great efficiency and personality to her many roles at CAA.

CAA welcomes Karen McLaughlin as our new Director of Budget and Research. Karen is an Arizona budget expert. She worked in the Executive Budget Office from 1985 to 1989 and has held a variety of budget and financial positions since then in the Department of Administration, Arizona State University, and the Department of Economic Security. A former undergraduate English major at ASU, Karen brings both communication and quantitative skills to CAA's advocacy. She also earned her masters of public administration at ASU.

CAA is also pleased to welcome new board members, John Loreda and Christine Nowaczyk. Congratulations to David Bodney, elected to another term as Chairman of the CAA Board.

CAA Honors Champion for Children Martha Rothman

Children's Action Alliance celebrated its 17th birthday by presenting Tucson community leader Martha Rothman with the 2005 "Champion for Children" award at its Annual Meeting in March.

The "Champion for Children" is awarded to a human services professional who has reached beyond the boundary of his or her job to speak out for Arizona's children and families.

Since arriving in Arizona more than three decades ago, Martha's work has centered on creating and delivering quality services to families throughout central and Southern Arizona, from Tucson to Nogales and Phoenix to Yuma. In 1970, she founded the Tucson Association for Child Care - now called Child & Family Resources. Her leadership brought to life a wide variety of services to strengthen child care, support teenage mothers and their babies, and reach out to families with children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Martha has used her entrepreneurial spirit, her commitment to justice, and her talent for collaboration to bring together hundreds of parents and community leaders over the years to open doors of opportunities for children and families. Although she retired from Child & Family Resources in December 2004, her activities on behalf of children and families continue unabated.



Kids Count in Arizona Border Counties



During the past year, Children's Action Alliance participated with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and organizations in three other southwest states to examine particular challenges and opportunities facing families living in the United States bordering Mexico. Almost one in four Arizonans lives in a county that borders Mexico -- Cochise, Pima, Santa Cruz or Yuma. Although employment statistics are similar between the border counties and the rest of the state, families in border counties are poorer than other Arizonans.

Compared to the rest of Arizona, in the four border counties:

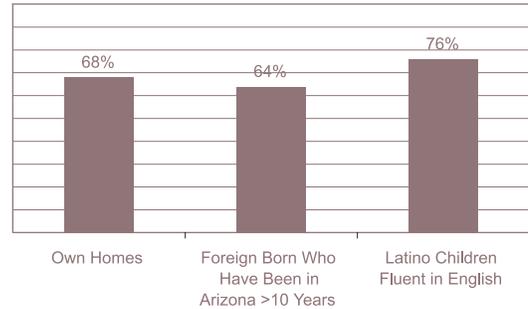
- Non-Hispanic White children are 37% more likely to live in poverty
- Median income is 13% lower
- Foreign-born residents are 42% more likely to become citizens

The data also show that most families living in border counties have a sound commitment to education for their children, significant work history, and strong communities. Arizona can build on these strengths with support for working families and the 300,000 children growing up in southern Arizona.



To learn more, check out a *Snapshot of Children on the Arizona Border* in the publications section of www.azchildren.org.

Families in Arizona Border Counties Have Strong Community Ties



Commitment to Child Care



Children's Action Alliance and the Beatitudes Age Link Child Care Center invited media and community leaders to the child care center in March to highlight the need for public investment in quality child care. Governor Janet Napolitano toured the impressive center, talking with children and teachers. Over one third of the children at Beatitudes have working parents who currently earn low

incomes and rely on child care subsidies to help them pay for this quality early education. The Governor spoke about the state's role in strengthening early education and committed her leadership to securing sufficient funds so that Arizona stops turning qualified parents away from help with child care.

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State Budget *continued from page 1*

REAL BUDGET INCREASES ARE SMALL

According to the legislative budget office (JLBC), state general fund appropriations grew 7.4% from 2005 to 2006. Much of that increase is due to moving from bonding to paying cash for school construction – a top priority for the majority legislative leadership. Excluding this shift, the state's general fund spending is only growing by 4.0%, slower than the combined rate of inflation and population, which is about 5.7%.

The Governor and many legislators deserve huge credit for strengthening the budget. And this was possible thanks to the voices of thousands of community leaders, parents, and caring citizens who rejected a short-sighted budget that left children and families behind.



four years and lived in more than eight different foster care placements. With their troubled childhood and no family support network to rely on when problems arise, these young people are likely to face multiple crises when they leave foster care. National research shows that compared to other young adults, youth with a foster care history are at greater risk of low educational attainment, homelessness, non-marital childbearing, joblessness, poverty, physical and mental illness, committing crimes or becoming victims of crimes.

In 2003, Children's Action Alliance published findings from focus groups and interviews with youth who had left foster care at age 18 or were preparing to transition to independence. With generous support from the Margaret T. Morris Foundation, the J.W. Kieckhefer Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Wallace Foundation, we have updated information on this issue in a new report, *Transitions: Building Better Lives for Youth Leaving Foster Care*. The report highlights current federal and state policies and funding and explores the huge challenges facing transitioning youth.

During the past two years, some initial steps have been taken by the Department of Economic Security to improve the transition out of foster care. But many youth continue to struggle desperately to find jobs and housing and to pursue their education. The report recommends ten practical action steps to help youth navigate a successful transition to adulthood, including: encouraging youth to remain in foster care until age 21 to retain financial and other support; allowing youth to return to foster care (up until age 21) after they have left; increasing the independent living subsidy rate to give youth more adequate financial support; and pairing all youth leaving foster care with an adult mentor.

For more information or a copy of the report, call Beth Rosenberg at 602-266-0707 or visit the publications section of our website at www.azchildren.org.

Join CAA October 29 to Celebrate Kids

Opening Doors is the theme of CAA's 2005 Through the Eyes of A Child annual youth art auction and fund raising gala. The event will be held Saturday evening, October 29, at the Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort in Scottsdale.

Dick Silverman, General Manager of the Salt River Project, is the honorary chairman of this festive event that celebrates the joy of childhood. The evening will feature a silent auction of high-quality art contributed by Arizona's best school-age artists, and rousing performances from some of our most talented children and youth.

This year's celebration will honor Senator Carolyn Allen, with the Jacque Steiner Public Leadership Award, and Dr. Stephen Mittenthal, President and CEO of Arizona Community Foundation, with the Horace Steele Child Advocacy Award.

For additional information and registration please call 602-266-0707.

Building Better Lives for Youth Leaving Foster Care

The State of Arizona, through Child Protective Services, is responsible for finding safe and permanent homes for children who have been abused or neglected and can no longer live with their parents. But if no permanent home is found, young people leave foster care for life on their own after they turn 18.

In the past year, 482 Arizona youth left foster care after their 18th birthday. These youth have experienced trauma and instability in their young lives; they had been in foster care for an average of nearly

Donors

The work of Children's Action Alliance is made possible through the support of hundreds of individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations. We gratefully acknowledge your contribution toward sustaining and strengthening the voice for Arizona's children. Listed below are those who have contributed \$35 or more between November 1, 2004, and April 30, 2005. Without you, there would be no voice.

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Donation Links Children to Health Insurance

Has it helped? This is the primary criteria that Bill and Debbie Carstens apply to the multiple children's education projects they support. The Carstens, noted philanthropists in the Telluride, Colorado area, moved to Phoenix about five years ago. Since making their home in Arizona, the Carstens have dedicated time and money to promote and support partnerships to raise student achievement and ensure success in school and in life for Arizona's children. From Prescott to the inner city of Phoenix, new approaches to learning are being implemented and evaluated through grants provided by the Carstens.

Access to health care is one of the key building blocks that allow children to focus on learning. The Carstens

have made a generous \$10,000 donation to Children's Action Alliance to support a pilot project in the Murphy School district that links children who qualify for the school lunch program to KidsCare health insurance. The pilot is already underway. If it is successful, it will be replicated in other low-income school districts throughout the state.

CAA salutes Bill and Debbie and is pleased to be working in partnership with them to change the lives and life chances of Arizona's children.

Special thanks to Dan Santy, Santy Advertising for the generous donation of time and talent in designing CAA's new brochure.

Jury Trials for Terminating Parental Rights: No Benefit to Abused and Neglected Children

In a special legislative session in the fall of 2003, Arizona lawmakers passed reforms and funding to better protect children from abuse and neglect and to do a better job finding them safe and permanent homes. But one of the reforms is straining the system and delaying permanency for children.

Beginning in December 2003, parents who are contesting termination of their parental rights can request a trial by jury, rather than a trial by a judge (called a bench trial). This option expires December 31, 2006 unless the law is reauthorized by the state legislature.

Children's Action Alliance examined the first-year impact on abused and neglected children. With support from *Fostering Results*, a national nonpartisan project to raise awareness of issues facing children in foster care, we reviewed information about jury trials requested and held between December 2003 and December 2004. We also interviewed professionals involved with jury trials, including judges, Assistant Attorneys General, attorneys representing parents and children, and CPS case managers.

Based on the first year experience, we urge the Arizona legislature to allow the jury trial provision to sunset. There is consensus in the four counties with completed jury trials that jury trials cost more than bench trials. Because the legislature did not appropriate funds to implement the jury trials, these increased costs are detracting from court operations for other children.



Because of the special requirements of jury trials – involving witnesses and jurors – they are taking priority over other cases. They add a significant workload for attorneys and CPS staff and leave less time for other abused and neglected children.

Only 13% of requests for jury trials resulted in a completed trial. In the vast majority of cases, parents relinquished their parental rights, withdrew their request for a jury trial, or failed to appear in court when needed. Even when the jury trial is not completed, however, the fact that it is requested triggers special preparation that requires significant time and resources.

Bench trials for termination of parental rights are held before juvenile court judges who have been monitoring each case from its beginning. There is no evidence that a jury trial improves fairness or benefits children. But based on this review, it is clear that jury trials impose unaffordable costs on a system that is already struggling to protect abused and neglected children.

For more information, please see our report, *Terminating Parental Rights by Jury Trial in Arizona: A First Year Look*, in the publications section of our website, at www.azchildren.org, or call 602-266-0707.

“No” Vote on TABOR Good for Kids and Families

Arizona's policymakers again rejected Colorado's formula for failure – the so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights. This proposal would write a permanent formula into the state constitution with a maximum limit on state revenues. Such a mathematical formula would handcuff state policymakers and prevent them from making the annual tough budget decisions they are elected to make. In February 2003, *Governing Magazine* said that this policy “has crippled Colorado's representative government when it comes to fiscal issues.”

Since adopting this ill-conceived measure, Colorado has cut investments for education, public health, safety, and other services. Per pupil K-12 spending has fallen 11% and, as a percentage of personal income, investment in higher education is down 55%. TABOR is a bad idea that Arizona children cannot afford. It would prevent us from climbing up from the bottom of the nation in K-12 spending per student, class size, children without health insurance, and low quality early education.

In the 2005 legislative session, this proposal never came to a vote in the full Senate. It was defeated in the House by a vote of 22 ayes and 35 nays. Special thanks to the representatives who voted NO so that Arizona can budget for the future:

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Kyrsten Sinema
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Publications Available From Children's Action Alliance

NEW! Compensation and Credentials: A Survey of Arizona's Early Education Workforce – describes the wages, benefits, and education levels of early childhood teachers and makes recommendations to strengthen the workforce and the education of young children.

NEW! Terminating Parental Rights by Jury Trial in Arizona: A First Year Look – examines the consequences of the new legislation giving parents the option to request a jury trial (rather than a trial by a judge) when children have been neglected or abused.

UPDATED! Transitions: Building Better Lives for Youth Leaving Foster Care – examines the dramatic challenges facing abused and neglected youth on their own at age 18 and recommends action steps to give them a solid transition to adulthood.

2006 Budget Guide: Getting to a State Budget that Values Children and Families – includes ten key questions and answers about Arizona's state budget and what it means for children and families.

Ready or Not – Here They Come! What Arizona Kindergarten Teachers Say About Preparing Children for School – highlights from a 2003 survey of 300 Kindergarten teachers about improving school readiness.

Healthcare Programs for Arizona's Uninsured – resource manual with easy-to-use index to low-cost health insurance and health services available to adults and children.

Arizona Juvenile Courts: Working to Improve Outcomes for Abused and Neglected Children – describes the role of the juvenile court in protecting children and highlights past, present, and future challenges.

KIDS COUNT 2005 Data Book – ranks Arizona compared to other states on ten indicators of conditions for children.

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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona

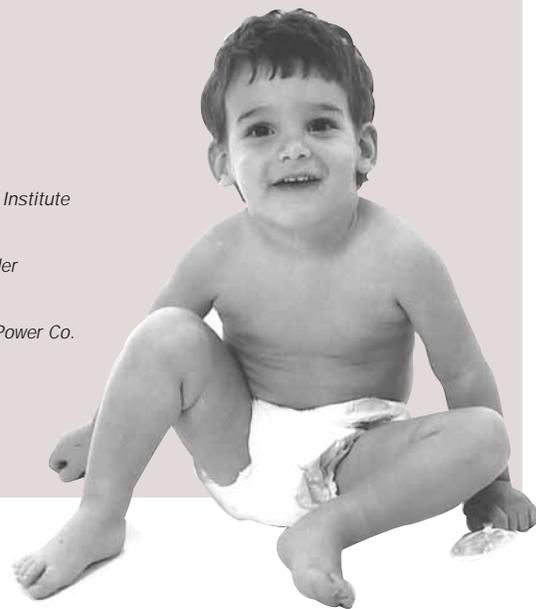
Christine Nowaczyk
Bank One

Steve Roman
Hamilton, Gullett, Davis & Roman

Brenda Sperduti
Sperduti NetWorks

Carolyn Warner
Corporate/Education Consulting, Inc.

Carol Kamin, Ph.D.
President/CEO



Mark Your Calendar

for CAA's *Through the Eyes of a Child* gala event on Saturday, October 29 at the Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort!



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