

2016 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Our Children, Our Future Campaign to End Child Poverty

1. Mental Health Matters: Develop a Statewide Strategy to Reform Children's Mental Health Care

Establish a Statewide Strategy for Combating Child Mental Illness. Responding to the Department of Justice report claiming that West Virginia is in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we call on the legislature to pass legislation that would create a comprehensive mental and behavioral health plan for West Virginia's children. Contact Kelli Caseman at kelli@wvmh4kids.org.

2. Protecting Quality Child Care Centers

Child care centers are crucial for educating our children, creating jobs, and helping parents get to work. Thanks to funding cuts and higher regulations, Child Care Centers are in jeopardy. The state should not mandate 5-day pre-K and child care, which would hurt centers; counties should have the freedom to create their own models. We oppose all efforts to reduce child care benefits that would effectively close these businesses. Contact Jeanette Barker at jbarkerplaymates@aol.com.

3. Right to Work is Wrong

So-called Right to Work states have a 54.4% higher on-the-job death rate and workers in those states make \$5,971 less per year in salary. Also, 7 of the 10 highest unemployment rates in the country are in states with these laws. We oppose efforts to pass Right to Work legislation in West Virginia. Contact Josh Sword at jsword@wvafficio.org.

4. Second Chance for Employment Act & Driver's Licenses

Thousands of West Virginians can't find work because they have non-violent felonies on their records – some more than 10 years old. Every year 55,000 more West Virginians

lose their driver's licenses – not because of unsafe driving or DUI – but because they can't afford to pay citations. Please support two bills – a Second Chance Employment for Employment Act and a Provisional Drivers Licenses bill – that would remove barriers for West Virginians who want to work and pay back their debt to society. Contact Amber Miller at brweyez1983@gmail.com or Sara Whitaker at saranwhitaker@gmail.com.

5. Tax Reform to Protect Roads, Children, Seniors and Jobs

Tax reform should guard our investments and add a State Earned Income Tax Credit. Contact Ted Boettner at tboettner@wvpolicy.org.

6. Juvenile Justice: Redirect and Reinvest

WV is poised to save \$20 million as the result of last year's reforms. But those savings won't exist if new institutions are built. These dollars should go to community-based programs proven to reduce recidivism rates and enhance life outcomes. Communities can do it better! Contact Jennifer Meinig at jmeinig@acluwv.org.

7. Stop Meth Labs

Follow the lead of some major pharmacies to require all single-ingredient pseudoephedrine products sold in West Virginia to be conversion-resistant. Contact Judy Crabtree at judy.crabtree@camc.org.

8. Increasing Local Food Access and Profitability

We propose three policy changes (a Cottage Food law, a food sourcing law, and tax incentive) that would put locally grown, healthy food in the hands of more West Virginians while simultaneously increasing market opportunities for local food producers. Contact Jeremy Grant at jgrant.wvfga@gmail.com.

The Our Children, Our Future Campaign is a non-partisan coalition of over 177 congregations, community organizations, schools, unions, chambers of commerce, and other partners – dedicated to ending child poverty in West Virginia. In 3 years, we have worked together to win 18 policy victories, from 127,000 working West Virginians receiving a raise to 3+ million more meals served in schools. This year's platform was voted on by 2,590 community leaders from across West Virginia, after a 6-month vetting process.

Visit ocofwv.org for more information on the issues above or to find out how you can get involved!

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9. Afterschool Opportunities for All

Expand academically enriching out-of-school programs, and keep WV schools and playgrounds open and available for community use. Starting this year with a modest outlay to expand the state's shared use program and turn dozens of West Virginia schools into an after-hours community center. *Contact Chris Kimes at ckimeshkfc@gmail.com.*

10. Expand Broadband Access

We support an \$80 million investment in broadband internet. Create jobs. Retain talent. Revitalize West Virginia. *Contact Natalie Roper at natalie@generationwv.org.*

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