



Springfield, Illinois

Illinois families seek change: Child tax credit may provide economic relief

by Mackenzie LaPorte
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Parents and advocates at the State Capitol to call for the creation of a statewide Child Tax Credit with Illinois lawmakers. (Economic Security Project Illinois Policy)

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"A state child tax credit would really helped me take care of my kids, my family, and not worry about having to fall behind on my payments on my bills," said Liliana Olayo an Illinois parent and leader for COFI.

Springfield, IL — Investing in our kids. The goal of many supporters and parents across the state of Illinois.

On Wednesday, leaders and advocates met up at the state capitol to call for the creation of a statewide child tax credit during this year's legislative session, hoping to change the lives of millions of children across Illinois.

With the help of Senate Bill 3329 and House Bill 4917, Illinois may be on the track to becoming the 15th state across the nation to implement a statewide child tax credit. If passed, the bill would create a child tax credit, offering \$300 for each child whose parents earn less than the median income.

State Senator Omar Aquino, State Representative Marcus Evans, Jr., and State Representative Mary Beth Canty have all sponsored the bill and stood side by side with advocates at the Capitol Wednesday.

Liliana Olayo, an Illinois parent and leader with Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) who advocates for the policy, shared her struggles trying to make ends meet.

"I work hard to provide for my children but it's never always enough," said Olayo.

Another Illinois parent, and leader at Worker Center for Racial Justice, Krystal Peters, shares how this tax credit could help her and her family.

"That 300 extra dollars is money I can invest in my child's education it's money that I can spend on basic supplies so that I can live freely and more easily," said Peters.

An [Illinois Economic Policy Institute](#) study shared that the proposed legislation on the House and Senate floor right now could decrease child poverty by 3% and [grow the economy](#) by \$636 million per year.

Frank Manzo with the Illinois Economic Policy Institute shares his thoughts on the possibility of a child tax credit.

Illinois can afford a child tax credit. There's concern about cost but Illinois has experienced robust economic growth in the last few years," said Manzo. "We have nine credit rating upgrades to prove that, we have a record high rainy day fund, and tax revenues that are surpassing expectations year after year

Manzo continued to share that child tax credits across the nation are becoming more and more popular as the years go on.

The states that have these child tax credits range from these deep red states like Idaho, to purple like Arizona and Minnesota, all the way to blue states like California, so its a range," said Manzo.

Manzo adds that he believes a child tax credit is really an investment in children and has a long-term impact on children, especially those in poverty.

Over at the Capitol, Illinois leaders and parents believe a tax credit like this could help families stay afloat across the state.

Senator Omar Aquino, a state leader and father of two twins shares his mindset as both a parent and a lawmaker.

It's not easy for families across the state these days, and that's why its time for this state, our state, to make investments in our future," said Sen. Aquino.

"In terms of raw numbers, nearly half of the kids in Illinois, 1.4 million. Let me repeat that, nearly half of all children in our state would benefit from this relief," said Sen. Aquino.

State Representative Marcus Evans, Jr. echoed Senator Aquino's remarks Wednesday at the Capitol.

14 other states have already taken action and others are talking about it. It's time for us to do it here in Illinois," said Rep. Evans. "Why can't we be the 15th state? Why cant we be the one to encourage the 16th state?"

Adding to the matter, State Representative Mary Beth Canty shares

"Even though congress is right now negotiating a tax deal with a version of the federal child tax credit, what's being proposed is not as robust as what families received during the pandemic and it falls far short of what we know families need to survive," said Rep. Canty.

Calls for a child tax credit are growing across the state, with a coalition of over 40 organizations across Illinois currently signed on to this proposal.

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Mitch Lifson, Vice-President for Public Policy with 'Children's Advocates for Change' shared their support for the legislation,

Along with providing needed economic relief to Illinois working families, a state child tax credit will help address racial and ethnic disparities in child poverty. U.S. Census data shows that in 2022 the poverty rate for white/non-Latinx Illinois children was 9.0%. However, it was 18.5% for Latinx Illinois children and 36.1% for Black Illinois children.