

Priorities *for* New Hampshire's Children 2012

Maintaining New Hampshire's Fiscal Options for Our Children's Well-Being

Issue Overview

CACR 6 and CACR 13 are proposed amendments to the NH constitution that would effectively freeze in place the state's revenue structure. Specifically, CACR 6 would amend the NH constitution to require a 3/5 supermajority vote of the general court to create or raise taxes or fees, and to borrow money. CACR 13 would amend the NH constitution to prohibit an income tax. This kind of tax cap imposed by CACR 6 has led Moody's to downgrade the bond rating of other states.ⁱ

The basic foundations of a healthy society upon which all of us depend includes state funded public education, and the social safety net. As noted by the NH Fiscal Policy Institute, "state budget deficits tend to emerge during economic downturns: tax collections typically decline, while the demand for public services generally either remains constant or grows, leading to a gap between revenue and expenditures."ⁱⁱ This only exacerbates the impact of NH's structural deficit and makes the enactment of measures that limit the ability of elected representatives to respond to changing needs a bad idea for New Hampshire's children and families.

Removing these policy choices from the possibility of consideration curtails the future democratic rights of generations of children, in addition to essential services for children and their families. The constitution is no place for fiscal policy or budget disputes. Opposing CACR 6 and CACR 13 is not to support an

income tax or any specific revenue source, but simply to preserve a full range of policy options, including the option for each generation to make the best decisions for its times. Every child in New Hampshire would be affected by these proposed amendments: children in public school who would see public support for education decrease, children on Medicaid who would see threats to their ability to access quality health care; children in the juvenile justice or child protection systems who would have access to fewer intervention and protective services; children with mental illness, faced with an already over-stretched mental health system.

Proposed Solution

Child and Family Services (CFS) and Granite State Priorities (GSP) propose to lead a statewide campaign to defeat CACR 6 and CACR 13. The primary goal is to prevent CACR 6 and CACR 13 from reaching the November 2012 ballot.

Strategies will evolve with developments. Initial work will focus on forming a statewide team of organizations to fight CACR 6 and 13. NH CAN partners already engaged in this include NH Fiscal Policy Institute and Granite State Priorities.

By focusing on the ways New Hampshire children today and for all time would be harmed by these bills, and by helping to broadcast and mobilize opposition to them, NH CAN's extensive partnership can play a decisive role.



The New Hampshire Child Advocacy Network (NH CAN), a program of the Children's Alliance of New Hampshire, is a statewide nonpartisan coalition of Partners and Advisors working to improve the well-being of New Hampshire's children. NH CAN partners annually develop a consensus set of *Priorities for New Hampshire's Children* focused on safety and well-being, health and wellness, economic security and education. This agenda for the state's children informs government policy and budget priorities and inspires community action.

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Participating in a focused campaign like this will also strengthen NH CAN and all of its partners, by building and strengthening the advocacy skills and capacity of their members and constituents/clients.

Call to Action

- Convene a leadership team of interested NH CAN partners.
- Help convene, or join, a leadership team of interested organizations for the statewide campaign that will be necessary to defeat these measures.
- Represent NH CAN in the statewide campaign planning and action decisions.
- With the NH CAN leadership team, develop a specific menu of roles NH CAN partners can play in the campaign and develop and use the pathways for interested partners to receive the necessary information, action alerts and tools, effectively connecting all NH CAN partners to their most effective role in the campaign.
- NH CAN leadership teams also focuses on the ways NH CAN's and its individual partners' work to defeat these measures can strengthen coalition and partner skills and capacities, and build infrastructure for effective future advocacy and action.

Find out More

Child and Family Services is a proven leader in developing and mobilizing coalitions to address urgent public policy issues affecting children and families in New Hampshire. It possesses both the inside knowledge of how to maneuver within legislative proceedings and the outside knowledge of how to work with a wide variety of coalition partners. It has been engaged heavily in legislative advocacy for over two decades. A

coalition of groups (including other NH CAN partners) and individuals that reaches over 80,000 people across the state, Granite State Priorities has been educating and advocating for adequate, equitable and sustainable revenues for New Hampshire for over five years, working both in legislative advocacy grassroots organizing around the state.

For more information, contact Jack Lightfoot at LightfootJ@cfsnh.org or Cathy Silber at csilber@gspriorities.org.

References

- ⁱ *ibid.* 3
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.nhfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Supermajority-Requirement-at-Odds-with-Sound-Fiscal-Policy-REVISED.pdf>; note: much of the text of this priority proposal is freely quoted from the NHFPI report.



Children's Alliance
of New Hampshire
Raising our Voices for Children



NH CAN is a program of the Children's Alliance of New Hampshire

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