



Children's Advocacy Institute

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FIFTH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S BUDGET RELEASED Public and Private Investment in Children Decreasing as Economy Rebounds

The Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) has released its fifth annual California Children's Budget, which analyzes eight areas relevant to the status of children: child poverty, nutrition, health, special needs and disability, child care, education, abuse and neglect, and delinquency.

The California Children's Budget 1997-98 found that state spending on impoverished children is in a long and steep decline. "What is most distressing about these numbers is not only where we have been, but where we are going from here," remarked author Robert C. Fellmeth, Price Professor of Public Interest Law and director of CAI, a statewide academic and advocacy center based at the University of San Diego School of Law.

"Welfare cut-offs for legal immigrants will begin in several months, plunging tens of thousands of children in affected families into deep poverty -- even though these families have done it 'the right way,' to quote recent political terminology. They will be followed within two years by one million non-immigrant California children, sinking further into poverty when their parents are cut from aid even though the jobs they are supposed to find are largely unavailable."

The California Children's Budget 1997-98 summarizes selected "condition indicators" of child well-being and analyzes 60 major state spending accounts impacting children. "California has cut general fund spending as a percentage of personal income by almost \$10 billion since 1989 -- all the while maintaining that same level would give us first-rate schools, keep children safe and well, and give poor children a decent chance in life," said Fellmeth.

"Instead, we are embarked on a continuing course of disinvestment in our children. While the fate of children rests with an accumulation of private as well as public decisions, government is a potent force which inevitably influences all of these decisions. The real bottom line must be our children, or we will all pay the price."

CAI was founded in 1989 as part of the Center for Public Interest Law at the University of San Diego School of Law. CAI's program includes academic courses and clinical training of law students in child advocacy; the Information Clearinghouse on Children, a resource and research service on emerging children's issues, which assists journalists, public officials, community organizations and academicians; policy advocacy on behalf of children in the legislature, state agencies, and the courts; and legal and budget research on issues relevant to child protection and child health.

For more information or to receive a copy of the report, contact Margaret Dalton, J.D., Project Director, Information Clearinghouse on Children, 619-260-4279.

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