

# CAHS

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The Honorable John B. Larson  
106 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Larson:

Once again, I am writing to request your support for and co-sponsorship of the State Child Well-Being Research Act—this year introduced as H.R. 2558. Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to end poverty and to engage, equip, and empower all families in Connecticut to build a secure future. We also are the Connecticut Kids Count grantee. I know that during your tenure as President Pro Tempore of the Connecticut Senate, you worked diligently with my predecessors and other state organizations and commissions to improve the well-being of children and families. I know you are aware of the importance of timely, accurate data about children and families and the beneficial effect such data can have on policies, programs and state and federal decision making.

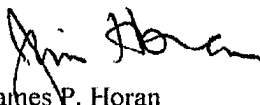
As Connecticut and the nation face the current economic recession, it is more important than ever that we document how children are doing in each state, with a wider view than data collection related to specific public programs such as Temporary Family Assistance, Medicaid, SCHIP, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. As we attempt to draw an inclusive picture of child and family well-being, it is equally important that each state sign on to data comparability. Without the same data definitions, it is impossible to compare the impact of one state's policies and programs to others.

To strengthen this proposed legislation, the Annie E. Casey and other foundations are offering to invest at least \$1 million to support state officials and analysts' technical ability to access and understand the new data tool and forthcoming information. This potential public/private partnership will expand policymakers' understanding of child health and development, the gaps in health care coverage, and the impact of child care quality, accessibility, and affordability on early development—to name a few of the possible impacts of the Research Act.

The growing federal debt and state-level funding short falls make it essential that policymakers have access to timely, high quality data to help ensure that every dollar spent goes to effective programs that provide real support to our most vulnerable populations. In Connecticut, we need more data to show the effects of the growing income gap on children, families, and the economy. We hope you will co-sponsor the State Child Well-Being Research Act.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of Connecticut residents.

Sincerely,

  
James P. Horan  
Executive Director

*We appreciate your leadership on so many important issues!*