

Recommendations for the Senate Select Committee on Child Poverty

How we build local power for change.

- This problem is not about fixing bad apple parents; it's about fixing a broken system. Roughly half of WV kids live at or near the poverty line. ***56% of WV kids are on free or reduced lunch; we are 49th on jobs and occupations paying below poverty.***
- It hurts more now. ***Historic rates of addiction, incarceration, grandparents, divorce, low social capital.***
- It's not inevitable. ***Senior poverty dropped 75 percent last 40 years.***
- But it could get worse. ***WV has the nation's highest rate of 16-24 year-olds who are neither in work nor in school: 56 PERCENT.***
- An ounce of prevention. ***\$1 on early childhood leads to \$7 in savings from crime, employment, and health.***
- Simple, but hard. Higher wages/benefits, lower costs, human development. ***It will take the political will to execute social and policy change.***
- Parents are the solution, not the problem.

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS COMMITTEE

1. **Let's work together now.** We have a platform of issues that we know can help poor kids and their families this term.
2. **Meet the communities, meet the families.**
 - Regional Forums with Us
 - Meetings with families (Catholic Charities, Head Start parent advisory groups, SEIU Local 1199, Boys and Girls Clubs to meet kids, Family Resource Centers Association, Child Care Centers United to visit center, In-Home Visiting site visit)
3. **Work with us on a Summer Policy Symposium** – with legislators, advocates, families to deep dive into key long-term areas (health, early childhood education, tax and budget policies, wages, and other issues that arise).
4. **Authorize an in-depth study** (like WI, VA) that examines the effects of potential policy change.
5. **Recommendations for future hearings** – 1. Medicaid Expansion, Early Childhood Education, Earned Income Tax Credit. 2. Mingo success story. 3. WI or VA legislators. 4. Family Independence Initiative, out of CA. 5. Bishops

What can you do right now?

- Medicaid Expansion
 - 120,000 Working West Virginians
 - Creates 6200 Jobs
 - Rewards work, supports healthier workforce
 - Enormous benefit to businesses – Tudor’s example
 - If we don’t do it, other states will take our money and businesses
 - All Dem Governors, 8 Republican Governors, incl Ohio, NJ, FL, MI, NM, AZ...
 - ***Puts ~\$4000-5000 back into the coffers of poor families – for child care, utilities, food, etc.***

Sun, April 7th – Statewide Forum