

# Media Advisory

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## **The Commission on Children: A Smart Investment in Hard Times**

Elaine Zimmerman, executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Children, issued this statement today in reaction to Gov. M. Jodi Rell's budget address on Wednesday:

“Children historically are lost in hard times. The recession is anticipated to cause three million children to fall into poverty and trigger \$1.7 trillion in long-term losses to the U.S. economy. In Connecticut, more than one-quarter of those using food pantries belong to working families. More than 100,000 children under 12 years of age are at risk of hunger.

“The Connecticut Commission on Children is the conscience and voice for children. We negotiate the policies and changes in state and local government that affect children's health, safety, and learning. The Commission galvanizes resources, constituents, and unexpected stakeholders to make sure children thrive. We have already drafted legislation, the first of its kind in the country, to ensure the strongest protections for children during this fiscal crisis. We are also working with leaders in Washington, D.C., to make sure our state takes every opportunity and identifies every dollar that might assist our children.

“The Commission has a history of finding the problem, bringing in the experts and the consumers, driving public policy, and getting media attention. We insist on civic engagement in all we do, with a focus on the family. Our agency has guided initiatives on school readiness, early reading, child poverty reduction, bullying, after-school programs, federal funds maximization, lead abatement, toy safety, parent leadership, child nutrition, and obesity reduction.

“Children will not recover when the economy recovers. The last two recessions reveal that children stay poor for five to seven more years after a recession ends. What we do now will influence nearly a decade of children's lives. This is not the time to cut out the agency that, for less than \$1.30 per child in Connecticut, ensures their health, safety, and learning.”

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