

## Testimony Calling on State to Restore Funding to The Diaper Bank of Connecticut

March 1, 2021

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Ranking Members Miner and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to urge you restore the \$168K funding cut to The Diaper Bank of Connecticut that was included in the Governor's biennial budget. The cost is inconsequential to the \$46 billion two-year budget—and to Connecticut taxpayers. But the impact of the funding cut is anything but inconsequential to thousands of families that struggle to meet basic needs.

Diapers represent a basic need to families with infants. They are vital to the health and well-being of infants, and the emotional health of their parents. Yet, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the poorest 20 percent of U.S. families spend about one-tenth of their after-tax income just on diapers (see chart, below).

This is not a time to be chipping away at the social safety net. As a result of the pandemic, lower-income families are struggling more than ever while the most affluent are experiencing substantial increases in wealth, the so-called “K-shaped recovery.”

A spokesperson for the Governor used wishful thinking to justify the cut, claiming<sup>1</sup> the shortfall could be made up through increased private funding. There is something fundamentally wrong with our values if meeting the basic needs of our citizens is not considered a responsibility of government. Now is a time to be doing more to care for our most vulnerable, not less.

It's important to put budget cuts like this one to The Diaper Bank in context. The governor's cut to this program was put forward at a time when, according to the Connecticut United Ways 2020 ALICE Report, more than one-third of Connecticut residents struggle to meet basic needs<sup>2</sup>, and that was before the pandemic wreaked havoc on the economic security of lower-income Americans.

It's a reasonable question to ask, “how are we going to pay for this?” The answer is simple: raise taxes on the wealthiest Connecticut residents. It's time that we start addressing the disgraceful income inequality that exists in our state, the third highest in the nation<sup>3</sup>. Requiring the wealthy to pay their fair share has broad public support, even among Republicans<sup>4</sup>.

Please take care of our neediest families by restoring the \$168K grant to The Diaper Bank of Connecticut.

Thanks for your consideration.

Jonathan Perloe  
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/diaper-bank-funding-cut-could-impact-thousands-of-children/2427011>

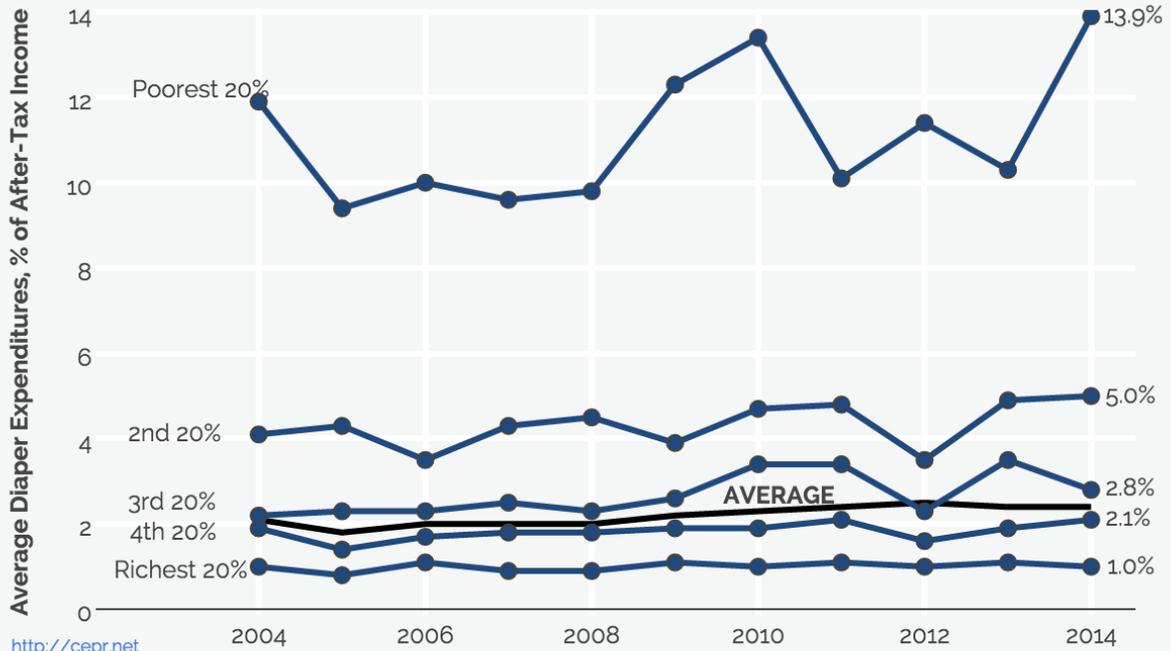
<sup>2</sup> <https://unitedwayinc.org/news/new-report-even-before-the-pandemic-38-of-families-in-connecticut-struggled-to-pay-for-basic-needs/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/Connecticut>

<sup>4</sup> <https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/428747-new-poll-americans-overwhelmingly-support-taxing-the-wealth-of>

### The Poorest Spend a Large Percentage of Their Money on Diapers

Average Diaper Expenditures as a Percentage of Average After-Tax Income, by Income Quintile



<http://cepr.net>

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics unpublished Consumer Expenditure Survey's Diary Survey. Weekly mean costs for "infant underwear" are for "infant underwear" costs are assumed be costs for diapers. After-tax income for 2013 and 2014 is from Consumer Expenditure Survey's Quarter