



Stand Up For Children

Questions for Federal Candidates



Even during tough times, we must make strategic investments in our children. However, these investments don't just happen. We need to speak up at forums, debates and campaign events. Candidates need to be asked what public investments they support to improve children's lives and how they will fund those investments. A simple question shows candidates that children — even though they can't yet vote — can't be ignored.

The American Dream is slipping away from more and more families, with a majority of Americans believing that their children will be worse off than they are. When asked if children today will be economically better off, worse off, or about the same as the generation of adults who are working today, 79 percent of voters in a national poll said that children would be worse off.

What policies do you believe will support children in reaching their full potential and achieving success?

Child poverty in Illinois has been increasing dramatically. Since 2007, the number of Illinois kids living in poverty has increased by over 75,000. As a nation, we have always believed that a person's success should not be determined by the income of their parents. However, research clearly shows that poverty negatively impact children's health and development.

What responsibility does the federal government have to ensure that all children have the chance to succeed?

The economic crisis has led to a sharp increase in the need for food assistance. Since 2007, participation in SNAP (food stamps) has increased by over 20 million people, half of whom are children. Despite SNAP's crucial role in ensuring proper nutrition for children, one proposal currently before the U.S. House would cut food stamps by over \$16.5 billion, causing tens of thousands of Illinois kids to lose access to food assistance each year. **Do you support cuts to food assistance?**

For our nation's economy to be successful and have a strong middle class, we must continually invest in our children so that they grow up to be healthy, well-educated, and contributing members of society. However, the U.S. is consistently ranked near the bottom of industrialized countries in areas of child well-being such as education and health.

What federal investments in children do you support in order to improve their future and create a stronger economy?

Especially during times of economic distress, strategic investments in kids, such as early childhood education, result in proven short- and long-term benefits. However, at a time when we need to invest in our economy and our future middle class, we are decreasing federal investments in children. These cuts are often justified by citing the need to cut the budget deficit.

How would you reduce the budget deficit while maintaining crucial investments in education and other children's services?



Stand Up For Children

Questions for Federal Candidates



Even during tough times, we must make strategic investments in our children. However, these investments don't just happen. We need to speak up at forums, debates and campaign events. Candidates need to be asked what public investments they support to improve children's lives and how they will fund those investments. A simple question shows candidates that children — even though they can't yet vote — can't be ignored.

Refundable tax credits – such as the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit – are among the most effective anti-poverty tools the federal government has. In 2010, these credits lifted 4.9 million children out of poverty. These credits have also been shown to increase children's earnings in adulthood by 17 percent. Yet some have proposed changing our tax code to get rid of these refundable credits. **Will you support maintaining these effective anti-poverty refundable tax credits?**

Illinois' state budget crisis is impacting the education, health care, and other critical services available to children. The state's Medicaid budget for the current fiscal year was cut by \$1.6 billion in June, including cuts to key provisions impacting children and parents. **What role should the federal government play in helping states ensure that children and their parents do not lose access to health insurance because of budget cuts?**

The Affordable Care Act will greatly expand access to health coverage, dramatically decreasing the number of uninsured Americans, including low-income parents. We know that this will lead to improved healthcare for many children, because research shows that kids in low-income families are much more likely to receive health care if their parents have health insurance. **What is your position on the Affordable Care Act?**

There are proposals in Congress that would fundamentally change Medicaid by capping federal Medicaid spending and converting the program to a block grant to states. If enacted, this change would mean that those who now would qualify for Medicaid — including children — could be denied health care if funds ran out. States would be allowed to restrict eligibility, reduce coverage, and impose enrollment caps. **What is your position on turning Medicaid into a block grant program?**

On January 1st, both defense and non-defense programs are set to take across-the-board cuts due to "sequestration." Some in Congress want to cancel reductions in defense spending and cut non-defense programs, including investments in children, even more. **Would you support leaving defense programs untouched, while cutting federal investments in children's health, education, and safety?**