



Family & Children's Trust Fund of Virginia

June 6, 2023

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia, 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin:

One of the duties of the Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee for the Board of Trustees of the Family and Children's Trust is to advise you on matters related to child well-being and family violence in Virginia.

We are writing to alert you to the correlation between poverty and child safety, and to urge you to create a robust set of child tax credits, preferably in the form of refunds, for Virginia families. Research findings¹ reveal that economic stresses on mothers and fathers – low wages, unstable housing arrangements, food insecurity, or a lack of transportation, health care or child care – can accumulate and overwhelm parents and caregivers and put children at risk. Available in 12 states,² but not Virginia, child tax credits can be used to supplement income among Virginia's working poor, thereby stabilizing families and supporting children's health and safety.

In 2020, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that 223,617 children, 12.2% of all children in Virginia, were living at or below the Federal Poverty Level, living on \$26,172 (or less) annually for a family of four.³ This amounts to \$2,181 per month, not enough money to adequately feed, clothe, house, and provide for children.

Governor, we recognize your commitments to Virginia families and their children, and ask that you work with your administration to implement a child tax credit refund program in Virginia as you craft your priorities and your biennial budget. That uplift among families would be among your strongest legacies for Virginia's children.

Thank you for your efforts and your consideration of this request.

Jeanine Harper, LMSW
Executive Director
Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now)
Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Co-Chair

Virginia Powell, PhD
Board of Trustees Member, Family and Children's Trust
Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Co-Chair

c: Todd Gilbert, Speaker, Virginia House of Delegates
Barry D. Knight, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
L. Louise Lucas, President Pro Tempore, Virginia Senate
Janet D. Howell, Co-chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
George L. Barker, Co-chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/factors/contribute/environmental/poverty/>

² National Conference of State Legislators: <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/child-tax-credit-enactments>

³ Annie E. Casey Foundation: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5879-children-living-in-poverty-annual#detailed/2/any/false/574/any/12494,12493>