



children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

As you continue your consideration of the Governor's budget proposals related to Economic Assistance included in HF2127, we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for several aspects.

The vast majority of Minnesotans (7 in 10 or 59,000) that benefit from the Minnesota Family Investment Program each year are children – half of them under 6, the most critical period of child development. Based on a robust and growing body of research, the National Academies of Science find that even small increases in family income, especially during early childhood years, can have a significant impact on the lifetime trajectory of a child – improving children's academic, health and economic outcomes.

For these reasons we are very supportive of the proposals to provide \$750 Emergency Payments for Families Accessing MFIP, to add a Cost of Living increase to the MFIP Program and improve administration of Economic Assistance Programs through uniformity elements (including 6 month reporting and prospective income calculations).

The economic and health impacts of COVID-19 have not fallen evenly across our population. Households with children, particularly low-income ones, are facing a disproportionate share of the negative effects with a two-generation, long-term consequence for the state. Many MFIP families and their children have been unable to access other public (state and federal) economic supports: **\$750 now and ongoing cost of living increases would be a vital support for children on the program.**

CDF-MN has partnered with state agencies and legislators to make our public programs more efficient for families and agencies. For this reason, **we are excited to see the proposals to simplify income support program administration and reduce mandatory monthly paper-based reports for families participating in MFIP (based on standard procedures in all other states).** We believe this proposal, if adopted, would help propel more of our most over-burdened and under-resourced families to economic security and improve economic and home stability for the thousands of children served by the program each year.

CDF-MN is committed to ensuring every Minnesota child has a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. We look forward to working with you to advance a budget that lifts children out of poverty and ensures a bright future for them and the state of Minnesota.

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