



2013 Legislative Champions

July 2013

Children's Alliance Legislative Champions are state lawmakers recognized by the Children's Alliance for their outstanding service for children in a specific policy area in a particular legislative session.

Each of this year's Legislative Champions provided significant leadership in the 2013 legislative sessions to preserve, protect, or advance state policies or investments that will improve the well-being of children in Washington. These lawmakers distinguished themselves by providing leadership in one or more areas of the Children's Alliance 2013 [legislative agenda](#).

Champions for Early Learning

To help increase the educational success of all kids, state legislators adopted the most significant expansion of high-quality early learning since 2008. A \$22 million increase in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) will help 1,700 more children start out strong and be ready for kindergarten.



Representative Ross Hunter: As Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Hunter included the increase to ECEAP funding in the House budget. Rep. Hunter is also recognized for being a Champion for Children's Health, for reversing an unfair cut to Apple Health for Kids in all House budget proposals and in the final budget.



Representative Ruth Kagi: Rep. Kagi used the full force of her role as Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee to lead lawmakers in both chambers and the Governor's office toward stronger early learning policy. She played a key part in securing the historic increase in ECEAP enrollment.

Champions for Ending Childhood Hunger

State legislators took a strong step toward reducing childhood hunger and increasing racial equity by increasing benefits in the State Food Assistance program for immigrant families. This \$9.4 million increase brings the State Food Assistance level to 75 percent of the level received by food stamp recipients.



Senator Joe Fain: Sen. Fain repeatedly met with, listened to, and learned from Children's Alliance members in his South King County district and led the effort in the Senate to increase State Food Assistance to 75 percent of full funding.



Senator Andy Hill: As the lead Senate budget writer and Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Sen. Hill included the State Food Assistance increase in the first and every subsequent Senate budget proposal.



Representative Eric Pettigrew: Rep. Pettigrew led House efforts to increase State Food Assistance, including publishing an anti-hunger op-ed asserting his support for equal benefits for State Food Assistance recipients.

Champions for Children's Health

State legislators increased equity and affordability in the award-winning Apple Health for Kids health coverage program by equalizing monthly premiums for all children regardless of immigration status. This policy change, a reversal of an unfair budget cut enacted in 2011 and a return to the original intent of the law, will result in all children, regardless of where they were born, having the opportunity to obtain affordable health coverage.



Speaker Frank Chopp: Speaker Chopp made equalizing monthly premiums for all children a top budget priority and ensured the funding needed was in the final budget.



Senator Steve Hobbs: Sen. Hobbs made restoring equitable monthly premiums for all children one of his top budget priorities and worked closely with advocates to secure this victory.



Representative Laurie Jinkins: Rep. Jinkins made equalizing monthly premiums for all children a top children's health priority and worked closely with advocates, legislative staff, and other legislators to ensure full funding in the final budget.

[Past winners](http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/champions-children-2006-2012) of the Children's Alliance Champion for Children awards are listed here: <http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/champions-children-2006-2012>.