



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Champions for Children

2006-2017

Children's Alliance Legislative Champions are state lawmakers recognized for their outstanding service on behalf of children in a particular legislative session.

2006

School Breakfast

Representative Joe McDermott

Representative McDermott (D-34) was the champion in the House of Representatives of the \$2 million increase in the supplemental budget for school breakfast and summer food programs statewide. Representative McDermott's leadership included working to develop bipartisan support for this investment among his colleagues in the legislature. Washington is the first state in the country to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price school breakfasts statewide.

Senator Margarita Prentice

Senator Margarita Prentice (D-11) not only made room in the Senate budget for \$2 million to insure that more children receive free school breakfasts and summer meals, she led the charge in educating her colleagues. Quoting a former legislator from the 11th district, Representative June Leonard, Senator Prentice reminded her colleagues that "hungry children cannot learn," and as a result of her leadership a minimum of 15,000 new students will receive free school breakfasts! Washington is the first state in the country to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price school breakfasts statewide.

Senator Craig Pridemore

Senator Pridemore (D-49) took a leadership role in promoting funds to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price school breakfasts and increasing funding for school breakfast and summer meals. He championed the school breakfast investment within his caucus to ensure that the \$2 million was included in the Supplemental Budget.

Senator Brian Weinstein

Senator Weinstein (D-41) took a leadership role in promoting funds to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price school breakfasts and increasing funding for school breakfast and summer meals. He championed the school breakfast school breakfast investment within his caucus to ensure that the \$2 million was included in the Supplemental Budget.

Children's Health

Representative Judy Clibborn

Representative Clibborn (D-41) is the children's health champion in the state House of Representatives. Representative Clibborn was the prime sponsor of House Bill 2376 which protects children's health by prohibiting monthly premiums for children in low income families. In a debate on the House floor about children's health funding, Representative Clibborn gave a powerful speech, asserting that covering kids makes good business sense: "It

is our duty to take care of children. Not only is it the right thing to do and the moral thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.”

House Speaker Frank Chopp

Speaker Chopp (D-43) has articulated the vision of health care for every child in Washington and provided consistent and effective leadership. Speaker Chopp started the legislative session saying that funding the Children’s Health Program would be a priority and he held firm to that promise. His resolve was key to achieving health coverage for tens of thousands of additional children this year.

Representative Lynn Kessler

Representative Kessler (D-24) sponsored an amendment on the House floor that increased the number of children enrolled in the Children's Health Program. The amendment added an additional 3,000 children. This was a significant improvement over the original House budget and eventually became the high water mark for the number of children funded in the final budget.

Senator Debbie Regala

Senator Regala (D-27) is a leading voice in the Senate on the campaign for health coverage for all children. Senator Regala sponsored an amendment in the Senate that increased the number of children enrolled in the Children's Health Program. She effectively persuaded her colleagues on the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the amendment passed.

Foster Youth

Representative Mary Lou Dickerson

Representative Dickerson (D-36) was the champion of House Bill 2002 which extends foster care services—including housing and health coverage—to youth who turn 18 while in foster care. This new law offers 50 youth per year the opportunity to receive extended services until they are 21 years old. Representative Dickerson was the prime sponsor of this bill which takes an important step in recognizing the public responsibility to help foster youth succeed after they age out of foster care.

Early Learning

Representative Ruth Kagi

Representative Kagi (D-32) led the legislature’s approval of the new Department of Early Learning (House Bill 2964). Representative Kagi is a nationally recognized leader in the field of early learning and her work raised the visibility of early childhood learning to a new level in the legislature this session.

Representative Maureen Walsh

Representative Walsh (R-16) was a true leader in her caucus this year for children's issues. Her influence and passion for doing what is right for children were instrumental in the great bi-partisan vote on the Department Early Learning bill (House Bill 2964). She is also an outspoken advocate for early intervention services. Plus, she gave a great speech at our annual Have a Heart for Kids Day rally!

Child Safety Net

Representative Eric Pettigrew

Representative Pettigrew (D-37) was a champion of preserving the child safety net for families sanctioned in the WorkFirst program. Representative Pettigrew sponsored a bill to prevent these sanctions. When the bill died, Representative Pettigrew rallied other legislators to lobby the Governor on this issue. These efforts succeeded when the Governor announced on February 28th a delay in implementing these full family sanctions.

Senator Lisa Brown

Senator Lisa Brown (D-3) worked hard to preserve the child safety net for families sanctioned in the WorkFirst program. These efforts succeeded when the Governor announced on February 28th a delay in implementing these full family sanctions.

Senator Darlene Fairley

Senator Fairley (D-32) was the prime sponsor of the Senate Bill to preserve the child safety net for families sanctioned in the WorkFirst program (SB 6628). Senator Fairley also worked to ensure that funding was in the Senate budget proposal to implement this bill. While the bill did not pass, the overall effort succeeded when Governor Gregoire announced on February 28th a delay in implementing these full family sanctions.

2007

Governor Chris Gregoire

Since her first week in office in 2005, Governor Chris Gregoire has made children's health, early childhood education, and other children's issues top priorities. This year, Governor Gregoire requested that the legislature pass health coverage for every child legislation. Her efforts were successful, as Washington became a national leader in passing Senate Bill 5093, which provides affordable, comprehensive health coverage options to all children in the state. Beyond coverage, this new law seeks to ensure that children will be able to see a doctor, encourages high quality care through a medical home, invests in community-based outreach and declares goals for nutrition and exercise in schools.

Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown

Majority Leader Lisa Brown (D-3) is a perennial champion for children. This year, she once again demonstrated why she is a leader on children's issues. Senator Brown played an instrumental role in the passage of the health coverage for every child legislation, Senate Bill 5093. Her efforts led to bi-partisan support in the state Senate. Beyond coverage, this new law seeks to ensure that children will be able to see a doctor, encourages high quality care through a medical home, invests in community-based outreach and declares goals for nutrition and exercise in schools. Because of Senator Brown's public service, Washington is now a national leader in children's health.

Speaker of the House Frank Chopp

House Speaker Frank Chopp (D-43) first articulated the vision of health care for every child four years ago. This year, with passage of landmark legislation, Senate Bill 5093, Washington state became a national leader in health care for children. Speaker Chopp has provided consistent and effective leadership in children's health. This year, he guided a multi-faceted and comprehensive children's health coverage law through bi-partisan passage by the legislature. His efforts were also instrumental in ensuring that funding was included in the final budget. Thanks to Speaker Chopp's efforts, every child in Washington will soon have health coverage.

Representative Judy Clibborn

Representative Judy Clibborn (D-41) was the prime sponsor of the House version of the health coverage for every child bill this year. With passage of this landmark legislation, Senate Bill 5093, Washington became a national leader in health care for children. Representative Clibborn has provided consistent and effective leadership in children's health. Her work over the summer and fall of 2006 identified the policy components of this major legislation. Thanks to Representative Clibborn's efforts, every child in Washington will soon have health coverage.

Representative Eileen Cody

Representative Eileen Cody (D-34) played a major role in the passage of the health coverage for every child bill, Senate Bill 5093, this year. With passage of this landmark legislation, Washington became a national leader in health care for children. As chair of the House Health Care and Wellness Committee, Representative Cody ensured that some of the most important elements of this bill—including equitable coverage for all children—remained intact through the legislative process. Representative Cody is a leading voice in the state on health care reform. Thanks to her efforts, every child in Washington will soon have health coverage.

Representative Mary Lou Dickerson

Representative Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36) championed a major reform of children's mental health services this year, House Bill 1088. This new law will improve children's mental health services statewide by developing a system that values early identification, intervention, and prevention. Representative Dickerson, working with community stakeholders, began planning the elements of this bill last summer. Her tireless advocacy for children helped to guide the bill through bi-partisan passage by the legislature.

Senator Rosa Franklin

Senator Rosa Franklin (D-29) was the prime sponsor of the Senate Bill that resulted in extending health coverage to youth who age out of the foster care system. House Bill 1201 will ensure that approximately 400 youth per year who leave foster care will continue health coverage until age 21. Senator Franklin's tireless efforts led to nearly unanimous passage of this bill. Because of her efforts, all youth leaving foster care in our state will have one more needed support.

Representative Ruth Kagi

Representative Ruth Kagi (D-32) is a perennial champion for children. This year, she once again demonstrated why she is considered by her colleagues in the legislature – and by communities statewide – as a leader on children's issues. Representative Kagi's efforts led to huge victories in 2007 in the areas of early learning, including funding for a child care quality rating and improvement system, pre-school, and home visiting programs. She was a leader in ensuring bi-partisan passage of the session's major early learning bill, Senate Bill 5828.

Senator Claudia Kauffman

Senator Claudia Kauffman (D-47) was the leader in the Senate on important legislation, House Bill 1472, that addresses racial inequities for children of color in the foster care system. She worked diligently with her colleagues in the Senate to ensure that this legislation passed. Senator Kauffman's stewardship of this issue was invaluable and proved to be critical to ensuring this legislation passed out of the Senate nearly unanimously. As a freshman Senator, she has shown her commitment to the most vulnerable children in Washington State.

Senator Karen Keiser

Senator Karen Keiser (D-33) played a major role in the passage of the health coverage for every child bill, Senate Bill 5093, this year. With passage of this landmark legislation, Washington became a national leader in health care for children. As chair of the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee, Senator Keiser ensured that some of the most important elements of this bill—including equitable coverage for all children—remained intact through the legislative process. Senator Keiser is a leading voice in the state on health care reform. Thanks to her efforts, every child in Washington will soon have health coverage.

Senator Chris Marr

Senator Chris Marr (D-6) was the prime sponsor of the health coverage for every child bill this year. With passage of this landmark legislation, Senate Bill 5093, Washington became a national leader in health care for children. As a freshman in the State Senate, Senator Marr played a major role in the adoption of this farsighted policy. He made an effective case to his colleagues in the state--and the public at large via a mid-session newspaper editorial—that health coverage for all children is a smart investment.

Representative Joe McDermott

Representative Joe McDermott (D-34) provided steady leadership in this year's successful campaign to improve access to school lunches. Because of [Representative McDermott's efforts](#), the state's 2007-2009 budget includes \$3.2 million to eliminate the 40-cent co-pay for School Lunch in kindergarten through the third grade—getting rid of a proven barrier to participation in school meals. A minimum of 2,400 additional low-income students will start eating school lunch, getting the nutrition they need to achieve in school.

Representative Eric Pettigrew

Representative Eric Pettigrew (D-37) led the way for a piece of landmark legislation, [House Bill 1472](#), that aims to reduce racial inequities in the foster care system. He believes that all children deserve an equal chance for success regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. Representative Pettigrew's tenacity, passion, and commitment to children are apparent in everything he does in the legislature. He has proven to be a committed champion for children over the duration of his career and this year was no exception.

Senator Margarita Prentice

Senator Margarita Prentice (D-11) provided steady leadership in this year's successful campaign to improve access to school lunches. Senator Prentice, following the mantra "hungry children can't learn," made funding for school meals a priority in the Senate budget. Because of [her work](#), the 2007-2009 budget includes \$3.2 million to eliminate the 40-cent co-pay for School Lunch in kindergarten through the third grade—getting rid of a proven barrier to participation in school meals. A minimum of 2,400 additional low-income students will start eating school lunch, getting the nutrition they need to achieve in school.

Senator Craig Pridemore

Senator Craig Pridemore (D-49), serving his first session as Vice-Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, provided key leadership in this year's successful campaign to improve access to school lunches. Because of Senator Pridemore's work, the 2007-2009 budget includes \$3.2 million to eliminate the 40-cent co-pay for School Lunch in kindergarten through the third grade—getting rid of a proven barrier to participation in school meals. A minimum of 2,400 additional low-income students will start eating school lunch, getting the nutrition they need to achieve in school.

Representative Mary Helen Roberts

Representative Mary Helen Roberts (D-21) was the prime sponsor of the successful campaign to extend health coverage to youth who age out of the foster care system. [House Bill 1201](#) will ensure that approximately 400 youth per year who leave foster care will continue health coverage until age 21. Representative Roberts' tireless efforts--starting with working with community organizations in the summer and fall and through the legislative session--led to nearly unanimous passage of this bill. Because of her efforts, all youth leaving foster care in our state will have one more needed support.

Representative Maureen Walsh

Representative Maureen Walsh (R-16) is a leader in her caucus and in the legislature on children's issues, particularly early childhood education. Representative Walsh was a leader this year in developing support among her colleagues for the passage of the child care quality rating and improvement system. This bill, [Senate Bill 5828](#), passed by a strong bi-partisan

vote in the House. She is outspoken and passionate about the issue of early intervention and prevention. She is a true champion and even displayed her other talents this year, [leading 600 child advocates in song](#) at our *Have a Heart for Kids Day* rally.

2008

Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown

Majority Leader Lisa Brown (D-3) is a longtime champion for children. This year, she once again demonstrated why she is a leader on children's issues. Senator Brown was critical in securing \$1.1 million to raise the gross income limit in the Food Stamp Program. This policy change will result in 23,000 new households receiving food stamps in Washington; most of these families are raising children. Senator Brown ensured that this investment was made even in a tough budget year. In doing so, she proved that she is truly an advocate for the most vulnerable children in our state.

Speaker of the House Frank Chopp

House Speaker Frank Chopp (D-43) has consistently been a champion for children, particularly when it comes to making sure that all children have health care. This year, Speaker Chopp was also an outstanding supporter of the 8,000 children in the state's foster care system. He was pivotal in securing over \$9 million in investments in foster children. Speaker Chopp's leadership this year will ensure that foster children are able to visit their sibling(s) and receive a visit from a caseworker every thirty days. Speaker Chopp showed, once again, that he is a champion for all of Washington's children.

Representative Roger Goodman

Representative Roger Goodman (D-45) is an emerging leader in the legislature on children's issues. This year, he successfully advocated for critical investments for foster children. He secured over \$1 million for foster children to get timely Child Health and Education Tracking Screens (CHET). Representative Goodman was also the prime sponsor of the successful Washington Head Start bill which holds the potential to improve the quality of and access to pre-school for hundreds of thousands of young children in our state. Representative Goodman was a diligent advocate, never letting up, even in the face of budget challenges. His efforts will ensure that foster children get the services they need and that early learning programs will be a higher priority.

Representative Ruth Kagi

Representative Ruth Kagi (D-32) is a perennial champion for children. Whether it is her work on early childhood education or foster care, she is laser-focused on the needs of children and families in this state. It was no surprise that she led the charge this year for significant investments in foster care. In a supplemental budget year that was plagued with a doom and gloom economic outlook, over \$9 million in investments in foster kids were secured. Representative Kagi was adamant that foster children should receive timely health and education screens, be able to visit their siblings while in care, and be seen by a caseworker at least once every 30 days. She was a true champion for children insisting that it is our responsibility to take care of the most vulnerable children.

Senator Jim Hargrove

Senator Jim Hargrove (D-24) has always been an advocate of ensuring that vulnerable children and families get the resources they need to succeed. This year Senator Hargrove took a leadership role in ensuring that the state invests in foster children. Senator Hargrove successfully advocated for investments in foster care and refused to reduce the package of supports, insisting that all of the investments in foster care were vital. This resulted in a

robust budget for foster kids, including funding for health and education screens, sibling visits and other critical investments.

Representative Eric Pettigrew

Representative Eric Pettigrew (D-37) has always stood up for children and families in Washington State. This year was no different, Representative Pettigrew fought tirelessly for the needs of hungry families and children. He led the effort to invest \$1.1 million to raise the gross income limit in the Food Stamp Program. This policy change will result in 23,000 new households receiving food stamps in Washington, a majority of which have children. His leadership on this and other poverty reduction is a testament to Representative Pettigrew's belief that especially in hard economic times we need to invest in ensuring that all families have their basic needs met.

2009

Speaker of the House Frank Chopp

Speaker Chopp (D-43) played a pivotal role in securing the needed funding in the early budget bill, House Bill 1694, and the final budget bill to reinstate a planned extension of the Apple Health for Kids program to uninsured children living in families earning between 250 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level, coverage that was threatened by the budget crisis. With Speaker Chopp's leadership, the state is well on the way to reaching the goal of covering all children by 2010.

Representative Ruth Kagi

Representative Kagi (D-32) led efforts to protect evidence-based home-visiting programs that support effective parenting in vulnerable families. In a year when many programs faced elimination, Representative Kagi worked to preserve home-visiting programs that have been shown to reduce school dropout rates, reduce child abuse, and prevent future crime.

Representative Eric Pettigrew

Representative Pettigrew (D-37) led the efforts in the House to fully fund an evaluation of the state's efforts to address racial disproportionality in the foster care system. Because of Representative Pettigrew's commitment to children of color in foster care, and his insistence that our state take the next steps to address disproportionality, our state will continue to be held responsible for remedying the over-representation of children of color in the state's care.

Representative Skip Priest

Representative Priest (R-30) was a member of the Basic Education Finance Task Force, which recommended the inclusion of early learning for at-risk children in the definition of basic education. During the legislative session, Representative Priest pushed for implementation of this recommendation via the Basic Education Reform Bill, House Bill 2261. While this section was vetoed by the Governor, Representative Priest remains committed to including early learning under the state's responsibility for basic education.

Representative Larry Seaquist

Representative Seaquist (D-26) sponsored and championed the Apple Health for Kids Act (HB 2128). Representative Seaquist worked with his peers in the House and Senate to pass a comprehensive bill that will draw down additional federal funding, streamline enrollment for uninsured children, keep children covered, and track health outcomes to improve access to care. Representative Seaquist also helped champion the efforts to fund outreach to inform families about Apple Health for Kids and how to get health care for their children.

Representative Pat Sullivan

Representative Sullivan (D-47) championed funding to continue waiving the co-pay for reduced-price meals for children in low-income families. Representative Sullivan led efforts in the House to retain over \$10 million to make sure that children could count on food at school and throughout the summer in this time of economic crisis. Additionally, as the prime sponsor of the Basic Education Reform Bill (HB 2261), Representative Sullivan pushed tirelessly for the inclusion of early learning in the new definition of basic education and succeeded in building support for early learning programs within the Legislature.

Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown

Majority Leader Brown (D-3) showed leadership in the Senate by securing full funding for Apple Health for Kids in both the early budget bill (HB 1694) and the final budget. Even in a tough budget year, Senator Brown ensured that we continued progress toward health coverage for all children by 2010.

Senator Claudia Kauffman

Senator Kauffman (D-47) fought tirelessly for the rights of children of color in the foster care system and other state institutions that are disproportionately failing children of color. She was the prime sponsor of Remediating Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Practices, Senate Bill 5882, to ensure the state takes the next steps to address disproportionality in foster care.

Senator Karen Keiser

Senator Keiser (D-33) rallied support in the Senate for the Apple Health for Kids Act (HB 2128), and worked across chambers in the House to develop and pursue policies to find and enroll uninsured children. Senator Keiser championed efforts in the Senate to pass a strong version of HB 2128 that will help provide excellent health care for children in the Apple Health for Kids program.

Senator Joe McDermott

Senator McDermott (D-34) continued his long-standing commitment to feeding hungry children. In a tough budget climate, Senator McDermott championed efforts in the Senate to make sure that funding to eliminate the co-pay for reduced-price lunch for the youngest children in elementary school and breakfast in all grades was retained. He also helped maintain funding for the summer food program.

2010

Representative Roger Goodman

Representative Goodman (D-45) sponsored legislation that sought to add preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds to the state's definition of basic education. House Bill 2731 will give more children access to early learning by making Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) the starting point for a statewide preschool program which will be available to all children by the 2018 school year.

Representative Ruth Kagi

Representative Kagi (D-32) stood with the Children's Alliance by calling for a firm funding commitment for programs that serve children from birth through age three. The birth-to-3 bill that Representative Kagi sponsored, House Bill 2867, requires the Department of Early Learning to prepare a plan for making early learning available to more infants and toddlers in low-income families, and to recommend funding levels for those services.

Senator Claudia Kauffman

Senator Kauffman (D-47) showed strong leadership in 2010 by sponsoring Senate Bill 6759,

which develops a plan to create an early learning system with a path toward preschool for all. This law requires the state to study the benefits and potential challenges of different approaches to seamlessly integrating preschool with the state's K-12 education system and to improving access to preschool for children across the state.

Speaker of the House Frank Chopp

In 2010, Speaker Chopp's strong leadership for children's health was unwavering. Speaker Chopp (D-43) united representatives in the House to fully preserve Apple Health for Kids – the state's public health plan for kids who qualify for Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and other coverage. Apple Health for Kids is recognized as a national model for providing comprehensive and affordable health coverage for children, and because of Speaker Chopp's leadership, this program will continue to be a model for years to come.

Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown

Senator Brown (D-3) began this session with a clear commitment to children's advocates that the Apple Health for Kids program must be maintained, especially in this time of economic crisis for kids and families. With this strong commitment to kids' health coverage at the top of her priority list, Senator Brown made sure a solid majority of her colleagues followed her lead. Because of her dedication and leadership, the Senate never proposed any reductions in health coverage benefits or eligibility. By maintaining Apple Health for Kids' integrity throughout the legislative session, 16,000 children were able to keep their health coverage and avoid drastic cuts in the governor's initial budget proposal.

2012

Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown

Senator Brown's work on behalf of Spokane residents and all Washingtonians was instrumental in protecting hungry children from further cuts to State Food Assistance. Senator Brown (D-3) also helped restore child care assistance to thousands of working families.

Speaker Frank Chopp

Speaker Chopp (D-43) championed the effort to increase enrollment assistance funds for Apple Health for Kids, to make sure health coverage protects the families that need it. Speaker Chopp also ensured no further cuts to State Food Assistance.

Senator Nick Harper

Senator Harper (D-38) worked hard to include a commitment to quality programs for infants and toddlers in the budget. His dedication ensured that the 2012 legislative session gave us a strong foundation for the future of early learning.

Senator Steve Hobbs

Senator Hobbs (D-44) brought his time, energy, and influence to protect Apple Health for Kids for all eligible children. He was a strong advocate to include funding in the budget that will help connect more children of color with health coverage.

Representative Ross Hunter

Representative Hunter (D-48) has become a strong voice for the importance of protecting health care for all kids. Thanks to his leadership, the 2012-2013 budget redoubles our state's efforts to connect uninsured children with Apple Health for Kids' comprehensive, affordable coverage.

Representative Ruth Kagi

The consistent support of early learning by Representative Kagi (D-32) has helped bring together children's advocates to improve early learning programs across the state. She led her caucus in including a commitment to programs for infants and toddlers in the final budget, which advances early learning for all kids.

Senator Steve Litzow

Senator Litzow (R-41) worked across the aisle to include a budget commitment to infants and toddlers that will help advance high-quality early learning programs across the state.

Representative Luis Moscoso

As a freshman legislator, Representative Moscoso (D-1) became a leader for racial equity and was a consistent voice in his caucus and to protect State Food Assistance and Apple Health for Kids from cuts that would disproportionately affect children of color.

Senator Ed Murray

When a slim majority of senators sought to eliminate State Food Assistance, Senator Murray (D-43) passionately defended those unfairly singled out by this cut. In addition, Senator Murray worked consistently to protect Apple Health for Kids.

Senator Debbie Regala

Senator Regala (D-27) worked to educate her caucus and her constituents about the importance of State Food Assistance to children and families. Senator Regala also helped prevent further cuts to programs for low-income families.

Representative Larry Seaquist

By uniting his colleagues in support of Apple Health for Kids, Representative Seaquist (D-26) kept children's health at the center of budget discussions during the course of the 2012 legislative session.

Representative Pat Sullivan

Representative Sullivan (D-47) has committed himself to protecting State Food Assistance from further cuts. Representative Sullivan was also a strong proponent of early learning, cementing a commitment to infants and toddlers in future early learning legislation.

2013

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, Representative Hunter (D-48) included the increase to ECEAP funding in the House budget. Representative 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: Representative Kagi (D-32) 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: Senator Fain (R-47) 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, Senator Hill (R-45) included the State Food Assistance increase in the first and every subsequent Senate budget proposal.

Representative Eric Pettigrew: Representative Pettigrew (D-37) 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 (D-43) made equalizing monthly premiums for all children a top budget priority and ensured the funding needed was in the final budget.

Senator Steve Hobbs: Senator Hobbs (D-44) 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: Representative Jinkins (D-27) 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.

2015

Champions for Early Learning

To improve educational outcomes for all kids, state legislators adopted historic new investments in early learning in 2015. These include passage of the bipartisan Early Start Act, which will increase access to high quality care for tens of thousands of children across the state.

Representative Ruth Kagi: Representative Kagi (D-32) used the full force of her roles as Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services committee and member of the House Appropriations committee to further early learning policy. Representative Kagi was the prime sponsor of the Early Start Act in the House and worked closely with advocates, legislators and staff in the Governor's office to craft the content of the bill and to get it passed and funded.

Representative Maureen Walsh: As the Ranking Minority member of the House Early Learning and Human Services committee and a sponsor of the Early Start Act in the House, Representative Walsh (R-16)—a fierce advocate for kids—played a key role in making the bill a broadly supported priority among House Republicans and Democrats.

Senator Steve Litzow: As the Chair of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education committee and the prime sponsor of the Early Start Act in the Senate, Senator Litzow (R-41) worked closely with advocates and other legislators in both the House and Senate to ensure the bill passed. In the months before session began, Senator Litzow made passage of the Early Start Act a priority for him and the Senate Majority Coalition caucus.

Senator Andy Billig: As a member of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education and Ways and Means committees and a sponsor of the Early Start Act, Senator Billig (D-3) was a leader in efforts to get the bill passed and funded. Senator Billig made sure that continuity of care provisions in the bill remained a high priority throughout the legislative process.

Representative Ross Hunter: As chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative Hunter (D-48) championed early learning by including historic investments for early learning in the House budget. He prioritized passage and funding of the Early Start Act and played a key role in securing the early learning investments included in the final budget.

Senator Pramila Jayapal: Senator Jayapal (D-37) worked with advocates and other legislators to ensure that key provisions promoting racial equity and access to care were included in the Early Start Act. Senator Jayapal recognized that our state's most diverse, youngest generation needs a variety of quality early learning opportunities.

Governor Jay Inslee: Highlighting the role of early learning in the state's cradle-to-career education continuum, Governor Inslee included historic increases for early learning in his budget proposal in December 2014. His proposed investments aligned to the core content of the Early Start Act. He played an active role in ensuring that the Act was adequately funded in the budget.

Champions for Ending Childhood Hunger

A 2011 cut to State Food Assistance had unfairly burdened immigrant families—primarily in communities of color—with hunger. In the 2015-17 budget, legislators brought State Food Assistance benefits to the same level as food benefits from the federal Basic Food or SNAP Program. Lawmakers have restored equity to our state's largest anti-hunger assistance program.

Representative Pat Sullivan: As Majority Leader of the House and member of the House Appropriations committee, Representative Sullivan (D-47) ensured that another year would not pass with unequal food benefits for recipients of State Food assistance. Representative Sullivan met frequently with advocates and constituents directly affected by the cut in State Food Assistance benefits. His strong support resulted in benefit restoration in the initial and subsequent House operating budget proposals, as well as in the final budget adopted by the Legislature.

Senator Joe Fain: Senator Fain (R-47) advocated for full State Food Assistance benefit restoration within the Senate Ways and Means Committee and with Senate Leadership. Senator Fain welcomed constituents to his office who outlined the hardships their families experienced due to lower State Food Assistance benefits. Senator Fain followed through on his 2013 efforts to equalize program benefits.

Senator Sharon Nelson: Senate Democratic Caucus chair Sharon Nelson (D-34) made restoring State Food Assistance one of her budget priorities for the 2015 legislative session. She introduced an amendment on the Senate floor to fully restore State Food Assistance benefits during the debate on the initial Senate budget. Her impassioned speech signaled her strong support for the food assistance program, which she described as critically important to her district and to the state.

2017

Senator Andy Billig: As a member of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education and Ways and Means committees, Senator Billig (D-3) took the lead on early learning issues in the Senate Democratic caucus, championing the expansion of the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and speaking up for early learning as a critical part of the education continuum. Quality preschool via ECEAP is a proven strategy to close the opportunity gap that faces many children of color and children in low-income households.

Senator Jeanne Darneille: As a member of Governor Jay Inslee's Blue Ribbon Commission that recommended the creation of the Department of Children, Youth and Families, Senator Darneille (D-27) helped to shape the new department in the idea's early stages. The department lays a new foundation for services to children, grounded in prevention, early learning, accountability to child outcomes, and multiple principles of racial equity. Senator Darneille was an influential voice in favor of integrating racial equity and child outcomes into the legislation creating the department, House Bill 1661, and led the Senate Democratic Caucus in its unanimous support of the bill.

Senator Steve O'Ban: As Chair of the Human Services, Mental Health & Housing Committee, Senator O'Ban (R-28) demonstrated his support for the creation of the new Department of Children, Youth and Families as prime sponsor of House Bill 1661's companion bill in the Senate. Senator O'Ban integrated new accountability measures into the bill, including accountability to improving child outcomes and reducing racial disparities.

Representative Tom Dent: As ranking Republican member of the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee, Representative Dent (R-13) led his caucus on the creation of the Department of Children, Youth and Families. Representative Dent ensured that House Bill 1661 responded to the unique needs of foster parents and early learning providers in rural Washington.