



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families



WASHINGTON LOW INCOME
Housing Alliance

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Advocates for children, families oppose cuts to services to fund McCleary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MON., AUG. 4, 2014 — Advocates for children and families have filed an Amicus Curiae brief with the state Supreme Court, opposing one of the Court's proposed remedies in the McCleary v. Washington case.

The Children's Alliance, Columbia Legal Services and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance filed the brief this morning. The brief requests that, as the state moves to comply with the Court's ruling, it refrain from funding education in a way that jeopardizes housing and other basic services to children and families. [The brief may be found here.](#)

"If we cut social programs to pay for education, everyone's worse off," says Paola Maranan, executive director of the Children's Alliance. "In addressing our failure to uphold kids' right to a basic education, we don't want the solution to exacerbate the problem."

The Amicus participants support the Court's finding in McCleary that the state must provide adequate funding to ensure the right of all children to an education that prepares them for lifelong success.

While education must be fully funded, the brief explains how students in low-income families face barriers outside the classroom that limit their equal opportunity to obtain a basic education. These barriers also expand the educational opportunity gap that exists between white students and students of color.

In the brief, the organizations explain how, even with the existing level of funding for social programs, students in low-income families and students of color often cannot achieve educational opportunity. Thus, the organizations argue, financing education by cutting or freezing basic services would exacerbate the barriers to education that students in low-income families and students of color already face.

Housing advocates assert the legislature has already cut to the bone funding for both housing and homelessness services. For instance, the State Housing Trust Fund has declined sharply since 2008. This important tool for creating affordable homes received zero dollars this most recent legislative session. Cutting programs could not have come at a worse time, as students in homeless households are at an all-time high. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reported 30,609 homeless students in the 2012-13 school year.

“For children across Washington, the lack of a safe, stable home can be a huge barrier to learning,” says Housing Alliance executive director Rachael Myers. “We already have proven, innovative programs that create affordable homes and keep families and children stably housed. They just need to be adequately funded.”

“Every child deserves an opportunity to succeed,” adds Maranan. “Good nutrition, household economic stability, child care, health care: these help keep kids in school, body and mind.”

Another Amicus brief was filed today by the Washington State Budget & Policy Center and six co-signing organizations. Their brief argues that legislators cannot responsibly fund education without raising new revenue, and that failure to raise revenue will lead to budget cuts that will harm kids’ ability to succeed in the classroom.

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The Children’s Alliance (www.childrensalliance.org) is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal level to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive.

Columbia Legal Services (www.columbialegal.org) advocates for people who face injustice and poverty. We seek to achieve social and economic justice for all, using policy reform, litigation, and innovative partnerships to reveal and end actions that harm the communities we serve.

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (wliha.org) is the statewide champion for housing working to ensure all Washington residents have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, and affordable homes in thriving communities.