

Pathways out of Poverty Resolution

Whereas, Poverty affects 20% of Florida's children, and more concerningly, 9% of Florida's children live in extreme poverty meaning they live in households whose income is below 50% of the poverty threshold. This equates to 362,000 children in Florida living in households whose annual income is below approximately \$13,125. Living in extreme poverty negatively impacts children throughout their lives, with regards to nutrition, educational achievements, environmental exposures, chronic illness, and language development; and ^{[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]}

Whereas, Structural inequities such as health care costs and mass incarceration disproportionately affect low-income communities. There are also racial and ethnic inequities in people's access and use of banking services; approximately 25% of the US population is unbanked or underbanked. A lack of financial inclusion or access to banking impacts low-income households' abilities to accumulate wealth and move out of poverty; and ^{[3] [6] [7]}

Whereas, Children's families' participation in the United States' Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a safety net program, has been found to create a long-term positive impact on these children. An increase of only \$100 (or 3%) in the EITC increased the likelihood of these children's good health as adults. However, in Florida, 17.9% of eligible households do not claim this credit; and ^{[8] [9] [10]}

Whereas, Evidenced-based programs, such as early childhood education, housing mobility initiatives, and others have shown to improve children's and families' future earnings, to reduce children's need for remedial education, and to reduce children's involvement in the criminal justice system; therefore be it ^{[3] [11] [12]}

Resolved, Florida PTA and its constituent associations will educate stakeholders regarding programs and policies which work to reduce and alleviate poverty and improve financial inclusion; and be it further

Resolved, Florida PTA and its constituent organizations will collaborate with poverty reduction, alleviation, and economic-justice oriented organizations, and be it further

Resolved, Florida PTA and its constituent organizations will advocate for and promote evidence-based programs and policies which work to reduce and alleviate poverty and support financial inclusion.

Rationale:

PTA focuses our advocacy on the well-being and education of all children and families. To accomplish this, we focus on a variety of topics including nutrition, health, health insurance, academic success, juvenile justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, PTA has not yet focused on a core element related to all of this -- poverty.

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Poverty impacts our children's health, educational experiences, and future careers and achievements, as well as their experiences within the justice system. Furthermore, economic status is a strong indicator of health and success.

To advocate on behalf of all children, we need to remember Bryan Stevenson's conclusion that "the opposite of poverty is not wealth. The opposite of poverty is justice."

Background Material:

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