

## Pathways Out of Poverty

### SUMMARY:

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

*Poverty affects 13.8% of Virginia's children, with 8% of Virginia's children living in extreme poverty meaning they live in households whose income is below 50% of the poverty threshold. This equates to 253,000 children in Virginia living in households whose annual income is below approximately \$13,125.*

*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, academic quality, opportunity and success, school safety, environmental awareness, and juvenile justice. However, PTA has not focused wholistically on a core element related to all of this – Poverty.*

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**WHEREAS**, Poverty affects 13.8% of Virginia's children, and more concerningly, 8% of Virginia's children live in extreme poverty meaning they live in households whose income is below 50% of the poverty threshold. Living in extreme poverty negatively impacts children throughout their lives, with regards to nutrition, educational achievements, environmental exposures, chronic illness, and language development; and

**WHEREAS**, Economic security programs not only help families address their basic needs today, but also have proven long-term positive effects for children, including better childhood nutrition, higher reading and math test scores, higher high school graduation rates, less use of drugs and alcohol, higher rates of college entry, and higher expected earnings as adults; and

**WHEREAS**, In 2018 the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit together lifted more children above the poverty line, 5.5 million, than any other economic support program; and

**WHEREAS**, The temporary lifting of eligibility restrictions of the federal Child Tax Credit under the American Rescue Plan contributed to a 46% decline in child poverty since 2020. In Virginia the expanded Child Tax credit helped 1.6 million (85%) of children in Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, Earned income tax credit (EITC) is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income that the federal government and many states, including Virginia, offer to incentivize work and help reduce poverty, particularly for families with children.

**WHEREAS**, Research links recipients of SNAP benefits with long-term advances in health and well-being, but roughly half of all households participating in SNAP are still "food insecure," meaning they lack consistent access to enough food to support an active, healthy life; and

**WHEREAS**, Access to evidenced-based early childhood education programs including programs like Early Head Start and Head Start supports school readiness through language, literacy, and social and emotional development and promotes positive parent-child relationships, and more stable and healthy home environments.

## **THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations will seek to raise awareness of federal and state programs and policies that seek to reduce and alleviate poverty and improve financial inclusion; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support making the Child Tax Credit (CTC) fully refundable for low-income families with children (including those who lack earnings or have earnings below the threshold), and additionally support establishing a state-level Child Tax Credit; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support increasing Virginia's state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundability; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support updates to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) that expand access and reflect current food prices, food consumption patterns, and dietary guidance; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support increases to Medicaid and/or Virginia's Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) reimbursement rates to incentivize more providers to accept and see Medicaid patients and to reduce the number of children with disabilities on Medicaid waiver waitlists. Virginia PTA additionally supports a Medicaid rate study to include school-based mental health services and technical assistance to school divisions to bill Medicaid for school-based services; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support strong minimum wage policies (\$15/hour) that increase economic security and opportunity for working families and protection of minimum wage pay for youth; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations support investing in employment preparation programs tailored to community needs and responsive to labor market demands; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, Virginia PTA and its constituent associations renew our support for early childhood education programs and Virginia fulfilling its constitutional mandate to fully fund public education and oppose tax credits and educational savings accounts that directly reduce the amount of funding allocated to public education.

**APPROVED May 20, 2023 at the Virginia PTA Annual Meeting**