

# From Poverty to Opportunity Campaign

## Realizing Human Rights in Illinois

### 2009 Legislative Agenda

Freedom from poverty requires both a safety net that affirms the dignity of all, but also real opportunity and allows individuals to move towards and achieve self-sufficiency.

Sign on to support all the bills below and bring Illinois one step close to ending poverty.

#### **Fiscal Reform**

Our ability to achieve our collective goal of ending poverty cannot be reached without fundamental, progressive fiscal reform in Illinois. Our current resources are stretched too thin to sustain the network of supports and opportunities necessary for our state to thrive. We fully support a fiscal overhaul that addresses Illinois' structural deficit, creates a progressive tax system that protects those in poverty, and provides the revenue needed now and in the future to realize the human rights of all Illinoisans.

#### **The Right to and Adequate Standard of Living**

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##### **Provide needed tax relief.** *(budget advocacy)*

Those in poverty need tax relief so they can take care of the basics – pay bills, get to work, buy a winter coat for their child. Support an increase in the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit so these families will be able to live a life with dignity.

##### **Give those using temporary aid a needed boost.** *(budget advocacy)*

If you are using temporary aid (TANF) to get through a difficult time, the assistance you receive is so low that you are living in extreme poverty. This assistance needs an increase by 15% to give families more stability as they work to get back on their feet.

##### **Make sure that support is available for those in need.** *(HB2383 – Rep. Burns/Sen. Raoul)*

The current economic crisis provides both a challenge and an opportunity for Illinois' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Basic changes in eligibility, access, and supports will give families experiencing poverty the critical supports they need.

##### **Meet people where they are at when they need assistance.** *(HB745 – Rep. Feigenholtz/Sen. Collins)*

When someone needs to use public assistance, they should be able to go to the office that works best with their schedule and needs. Support modest changes that make life easier for those that need assistance.

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### ***The Right to Housing***

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**Make sure renters have secure, safe housing.** (HB3863 – Rep. Burns/Sen. Collins)

Renters should not lose their housing because the owner is facing foreclosure. Moreover, they should not have to worry about the building be safe and habitable for the same reason. Support common sense reform that ensures all families are protected, regardless of who owns the property.

### ***The Right to Food***

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**Increase funding for vital hunger relief programs.** (SB2182 – Noland-Milner)

Everyone, regardless of their economic situation, should be able to feed their family. Support the expansion of statewide hunger relief through funding for the Food for Families Program, which will provide quality, nutritious food to every county in Illinois.

### ***The Right to Work***

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**Reform child care assistance to improve family stability.** (HB2300 – Hernandez)

Child care co-pays too often increase at a rate that wipe out pay raises and keep families from moving ahead. With modest reforms, co-pays can rise at a rate that allows working families to increase their stability and move towards self-sufficiency.

### ***The Right to Healthcare***

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**Guarantee health care for adults at critical times.** (SB1855 – Schoenberg)

Very poor adults often have high rates of chronic health problems, but can't get regular medical care because they fall through the cracks in the Medicaid program and can't afford private insurance. Support an expansion of Medicaid for low-income, childless adults.

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