



Politics aside, let's focus on the budget

Politicians must stop arguing about who is more "phony" and "reckless" and create more revenue for Illinois

By: John Bouman

[Published June 12, 2015](#)

While political polarization has been the focus of the budget process in Springfield, what Illinois families want to know is how this will affect their everyday lives. Many citizens — business leaders, human service providers, educators, seniors — are telling lawmakers and the governor to choose revenue to avoid deep cuts that would grievously harm children, families, communities and the economy.

Three budget analyses released in May show how to protect important public investments while eliminating the budget shortfall. The analyses from the Civic Federation, the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and Voices for Illinois Children have a great deal in common.

These fiscal experts identify expiring corporate and individual income tax rates as the primary cause of the deficit. They note how investment in public services drives economic growth and strengthens families and communities. They call on lawmakers to choose revenue over steep cuts to vital services. They identify modernizing the sales tax to include services, raising corporate taxes, taxing some retirement income and raising individual income tax rates as options to prevent damaging cuts.

Neither the General Assembly nor the governor has produced a balanced budget. Neither has included new revenue in a budget proposal.

Politicians must stop arguing about whose plan is more “phony” and “reckless” and instead work on an adequate revenue package that will not result in harm. The longer the governor and General Assembly wait to reach such an agreement, the more they threaten the delivery of vital services.

Let's stop focusing on what political leaders need and instead focus on what families need.

John Bouman is the President of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law in Chicago. The Shriver Center is a founding member of the [Responsible Budget Coalition](#), a diverse group of 200 organizations from across Illinois committed to protecting vital services by choosing revenue.