

Senate President Karen Spilka  
Office of Senate President  
State House Room 332  
Boston, MA 02133

Speaker Robert DeLeo  
Office of the Speaker of the House  
State House Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

August 16, 2018

Dear Senate President Spilka and Speaker Deleo,

Children's HealthWatch commends the state Legislature for its efforts to repeal the Temporary Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) family cap. Children's HealthWatch's network of pediatricians, public health researchers, and child health policy experts seeks to improve the health and well-being of young children by informing policies that address and alleviate family economic hardships in cost-effective ways. We support the repeal because ending the cap will improve the health of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable young children, significantly reduce healthcare costs, and save taxpayers substantial amounts of money.

Our research shows that maintaining the TAFDC family cap puts the health and development of thousands of the Commonwealth's youngest children at risk by unnecessarily exposing them and their families to hardships that harm all their health. Children's HealthWatch has found that families of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers subject to the TAFDC family cap reported higher rates of food insecurity. In addition, young children in families affected by the family cap rule were more likely to be in fair or poor health, and at risk for developmental delays and compromised school readiness when compared to those in TAFDC households not subject to the family cap<sup>1</sup>. Thus, our data indicates that repealing the family cap rule will reduce food insecurity and improve the health and development of many young children in Massachusetts,<sup>2</sup> likely diminishing preventable costs to the state's health care and educational systems.

We are grateful for the Legislature's leadership in supporting *Lifting the Cap on Kids* and we will continue to show our support on this very important issue.

Sincerely,



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[Children's HealthWatch](#) is a nonpartisan network of pediatricians, public health researchers, and policy and child health experts committed to improving children's health in America. Every day from the frontlines of pediatric health care, in urban hospitals across the country, we collect data on children ages zero to four who are from families experiencing economic hardship. We analyze and release our findings to academics, legislators, and the public to inform public policies and practices that can give all children equal opportunities for healthy, successful lives.

For questions or further information, please contact Keith Chappelle, Policy Analyst for Children's HealthWatch at [Keith.Chappelle@bmc.org](mailto:Keith.Chappelle@bmc.org) or (617) 414-6364.

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<sup>1</sup> Ettinger de Cuba S and Bovell-Ammon A. Why Pediatricians Urge TAFDC Family Cap Repeal. Children's HealthWatch, 2017. Available at: <http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Childrens-HealthWatch-Family-Cap-Handout-REV.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Poblacion A, Testimony: Before the Committee on Children, Families and Person with Disabilities. Children's HealthWatch, 2017. Available at: <http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Childrens-HealthWatch-Family-Cap-Handout-REV.pdf>.