



Lift the Cap on Kids

SB 34 (Senator DiDomenico) and HB 85 (Representative Decker)

Rosie's Place Staff and Supporters ask our legislators to **support SB 34/HB 85** to lift the TAFDC family cap and value all children equally.

What is TAFDC?

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children is a state and federally funded program that provides monthly cash assistance to Massachusetts families with extremely low-incomes and assets. Currently, 31,730 families receive TAFDC throughout Massachusetts.

What is the Cap on Kids?

The Cap on Kids—also called the Family Cap—denies TAFDC to children conceived while or soon after the family received benefits.

Seven states have lifted the Cap in recent years. Massachusetts is one of seventeen states that still have a regressive Cap or similar policy.

How does the Cap on Kids work?

Generally, the amount of cash assistance given increases by about \$100 per family member. For example, the basic grant for a family of three is \$578, and the basic grant for a family of four is \$673.

However, under current law, family size is “capped” once the family begins to receive TAFDC. Any additional children are excluded from the grant, and the amount of assistance doesn't increase. For example, a family of four with one child born after the family began to receive benefits would only ever receive \$578.

How does the Cap on Kids impact low-income families?

9,400 children in Massachusetts are currently denied TAFDC benefits because of the Cap on Kids.

Children in families impacted by the Cap are more likely to experience homelessness and are at increased risk for cognitive, emotional, and physical health challenges.¹

The Cap does **not** reduce childbearing among TAFDC recipients, as it was designed to do.² Despite the racist and classist assumptions on which the policy was based, families who receive cash assistance are on average the same size as families in the rest of the population.

What will it cost to lift the Cap on Kids?

The projected cost of about \$11 million annually is a small, impactful investment against the lifetime costs of children growing up in extreme poverty.

¹ Burnham, L. & Desai, A., *California's Child Exclusion Law Attacks Women and Children's Rights*, 16 *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 1, 38 (2009). Cook, J.T., et al., *Welfare Reform and the Health of Young Children*, *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 156 (2002).

² Romero, D. and Agenor, M., *U.S. Fertility Prevention as Poverty Prevention: An Empirical Question and Social Justice Issue*, 19 *Women's Health Issues* 355, 361 (2009); Dyer, W., and Fairlie, R., *Do Family Caps Reduce Out-of-Wedlock Births? Evidence from Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, New Jersey and Virginia*, 23 *Population Research and Policy Review* 441 (2004).