



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Sen. Gounardes Joins Elected Officials, Advocates, Impacted Families to Rally for the Working Families Tax Credit

ANDREW GOUNARDES February 26, 2025

| ISSUE: **WORKING FAMILIES, CHILD TAX CREDIT, CHILD POVERTY, AFFORDABILITY**



The Working Families Tax Credit would give families up to \$1,600 per child annually to pay for essentials like groceries, rent and childcare

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**Albany, NY** - New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes joined elected officials, advocates and impact families from across the state for a press conference and rally calling for the passage of the Working Families Tax Credit ([S.2082/A.3474](#)), a bold proposal to tackle the state's affordability crisis, slash child poverty and grow the middle class.

The [Working Families Tax Credit](#) combines and expands existing tax credits to give families up to \$1,600 per child, guarantee a \$100 minimum credit per child, close loopholes and pay out the benefit quarterly instead of once per year. It would also be [pinned to inflation](#), so support for families will grow even if costs rise.

The Working Families Tax Credit would slash child poverty nearly 17% and cut deep child poverty by 22%, [according to Policy Engine](#), which also found the proposal would increase the net income of more than a third of the state's residents. The bill is also identical to [the top recommendation](#) of Governor Kathy Hochul's expert [Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council](#).

At the rally, speakers explained why the Working Families Tax Credit is the best way to meet New York's legally-mandated [poverty reduction goals](#) and stop working families from [leaving the state](#).

"This is an existential question for us: do we want New York to be a place where children go hungry and parents struggle to make ends meet? Or do we want it to be a place where families can put down roots and thrive?" **said State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. "To me, the answer is clear. My Working Families Tax Credit would give parents up to \$1,600 per child annually so they can afford groceries, childcare and rent. It's the bold policy we need to tackle the affordability crisis, slash child poverty and grow the middle class. New Yorkers can't afford to wait, and neither can we: let's pass this bill now."

"New Yorkers are facing an affordability crisis and it is imperative that our state do more to put money back in people's pockets. The Working Families Tax Credit will yield an average \$1,200 credit for 23% of New Yorkers and help families struggling to make ends meet. The Governor's proposal is a start but we need to go further, we need the Working Families Tax Credit," **said Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi.**

"As New Yorkers face a worsening affordability crisis, Governor Hochul must get serious about passing policies that will make a real, tangible difference in people's lives. Tweaks to the status quo will not do — being a true champion for working families starts with Hochul passing the Working Families Tax Credit to put money back in New York families' pockets and dramatically lower the cost of everyday expenses," **said Jasmine Gripper and Ana Maria Archila, Co-Directors of the New York Working Families Party.**

"I represent the city of Syracuse, and I am proud to represent the city of Syracuse. But I am not proud that the city of Syracuse, for the last two years, has topped the list that no city wants to be on: we have the highest child poverty rates in the entire country. It is wrong, it is cruel, and it is destroying the lives of children. We have a very disturbing statistic this year: for the first time ever in Central New York, there are more families with children who are homeless than there are single individuals who are homeless. The WFTC will make a huge difference for the city of Syracuse, and this is the way we chart a path away from NY topping those lists that none of our cities should be on," **said Senator Rachel May.**

"Too many New Yorkers are struggling to keep up with the rising costs of housing, utilities and food, as prices continue to surge. While Governor Hochul and legislative leadership are taking some steps to address the affordability crisis, they must go further and enact the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) to give more families much needed relief," **said Ace Sutherland, Director of Organizing and Strategy, New York Immigration Coalition.** "The WFTC is particularly urgent for the nearly 700,000 undocumented New Yorkers who pay \$3.1 billion in

state and local taxes, and who are currently left out of many programs and need support to pay their bills. We must pass the WFTC this legislative session in order to build a more equitable and inclusive New York where every working family can thrive.”

“New York's working families are the backbone of our economy, yet too many are forced to stretch every dollar just to survive," stated Senator Robert Jackson. "The Working Families Tax Credit isn't just policy—it's a pledge to uphold dignity, equity, and economic justice. This initiative is about ensuring every family can afford necessities—food, shelter, and a stable future. Albany must align with the real power of our state, our people. We must move beyond mere words to definitive action. The era of half-measures is behind us. It's time to pass the Working Families Tax Credit and provide the substantial relief that our families urgently need,” **said Senator Robert Jackson.**

“When basic necessities like a carton of eggs become so unaffordable that some stores start selling them as ‘loosies,’ it’s a clear sign that government needs to take action to help New Yorkers keep up with the cost of living. The Working Families Tax Credit is the best way forward that will provide multiple new benefits to families with children, including raising the amount received per child. By putting money back into the pockets of New York families, we can ensure no one has to choose between the essentials and making ends meet,” **said State Senator John Liu.**

“Affordability is an ongoing challenge for our working families," **said Senator Samra Brouk.** "In New York State, 18% of children experience poverty– that rate is more than double in the city of Rochester. I proudly co-sponsor the Working Families Tax Credit bill (S2082) as an effective measure to reduce child poverty and increase affordability by keeping money in the pockets of hardworking parents.”

“With the cost of living as high as it is, we simply have to do all we can to help our residents. The Working Families Tax Credit provides badly needed relief to parents with children. The benefits of this initiative will be impactful: studies show that giving tax credits to families produce better educational outcomes for young students and boost their health as well,” **said Senator Pete Harckham**

“We want New York to be a place where working families have their best shot at a good life, and the Working Families Tax Credit would be a game-changer for making life more affordable,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “Too many families are struggling to meet basic needs, and by putting money in their pockets for essentials, like groceries, childcare, housing, and utilities, we can help grow our middle class and provide much-needed stability. Where Washington failed by letting the federal child tax credit expire, New York must stand up to deliver for our communities.”

“At a time when New Yorkers and their families are struggling to afford the basics amid a rising cost of living, the Working Families Tax Credit would provide families with \$1,600 per child, a \$100 minimum credit per child regardless of income, eliminate the cap on the number of eligible kids, and pin the credit to inflation—delivering real relief,” **said Senator Patricia Fahy**. “One in every five kids in New York is living in poverty, and creating the Working Families Tax Credit would provide a much-needed lifeline for young families across the state. Thank you to Senator Gounardes for continuing to advocate for the WFTC—I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to include it in this year's budget and, additionally, to expanding the state's Earned Income Tax Credit to provide even more relief to our workers and families.”

“No child in New York State should be living in poverty. We have an opportunity to cut child poverty by almost 25% by passing the Working Families Tax Credit. This credit, modeled after the 2021 federal version, which lifted almost 3 million children out of poverty, would

expand upon the Governor's proposal by raising the maximum credit allowed per child, expanding the pool of eligible children and shifting the payout structure to one that makes more sense for more families, allowing more New Yorkers to benefit from this program. When it comes to taking care of our kids no price is too high to pay," **said Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal.**

"Governor Hochul and the Legislature are united in supporting a Working Families Tax Credit this year to meet the needs of New York's families. I support the tax credit plan in A.3474 (Hevesi) because this bill will provide solid tax credits to working families that will bring a real reduction in childhood poverty in our state and provide a stable framework for continued tax benefits in the future. I am optimistic we can agree on a solid plan in the upcoming budget negotiations," **said Assemblyman Steve Otis.**

"We all are seeing higher prices and experiencing difficulty in stretching our budgets. Costs for raising a family in New York are daunting. Families in Syracuse, where we find the nation's worst child poverty among larger U.S. cities, are struggling significantly. The Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) provides working families with increased support while making the most of our state's tax system by streamlining duplicative, overlapping tax credits. The benefits of the WFTC include covering children 17 years old, eliminating the phase-in allowing the families with the lowest income to receive the largest credit, increasing the maximum credit to \$1,600 per child and providing a \$100 credit per child regardless of income. To better serve New Yorkers, the new NYS WFTC will be paid out quarterly, instead of one lump sum annually. Implementing the new credit could result in a dramatic 17% reduction in New York children under 18 living in poverty. The American Rescue Plan's Child Tax Credit expansion and stimulus payments, in conjunction with other relief measures, spurred the largest one-year drop in child poverty on record in 2021. In 2022, the expiration of that aid led to a historic increase in child poverty. Addressing child poverty through child tax credits works," **said Assemblyman Al Stirpe.**

“Far too many children are living in poverty, especially in my district here in Rochester where nearly 50% of children live below the poverty line,” **said Senator Jeremy Cooney**. “Tax credits are a proven, direct way we can combat this trend and uplift our next generation. I’m proud to work with Senator Gounardes and my colleagues to expand these tax credits and continue our work to make New York a more affordable place to live.”

“The Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) is uniquely fitting to the needs of New Yorkers in the context of rising costs, stagnant wages, and crumbling federal funding of programs that support working class families. This much-needed credit would put up to \$1,600 per child back into the pockets of hardworking New Yorkers—helping families afford essentials like food, childcare, and rent. Unlike other proposals, the WFTC is indexed to inflation, ensuring it remains a long-term, sustainable solution for families struggling to make ends meet across the state. Let’s work together to push for the inclusion of the Working Families Tax Credit in the state budget and ensure that every family in New York gets the support they deserve,” **said Assemblymember Anna Kelles**.

"The NY Working Families Tax Credit will bring much-needed changes to our tax code to make our state and city more affordable for those who need it most. I'm ardently supporting this legislation so we can put more money into the pockets of hard-working, economically burdened workers and their families so they can pay for what they need and have less economic tax burdens. On top of the WFTC's \$1,600 increase for eligible families, and a \$500 credit per child to all low and middle-income families, it will unlock vital expansions to provide credits for our lowest-income families and immigrant tax filers that were left out of the system," **said Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**.

“This is a critical time for so many families across the state and they are looking to us to address affordability expansively. With funding cuts and threats coming from the Trump administration — fear of losing jobs, threats of separating families, and climbing grocery

prices, — our families need relief. The Empire Child Tax Credit was a good start to the conversation. Still, the Working Families Tax Credit will provide more families - 3 million New York families - much-needed support and cover 17-year-old children. And we can do it over a three-year phase-in. Let's do all we can to fortify New Yorkers and deliver much-needed tax relief," **said Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas.**

"We are at an inflection point in New York. The cost-of-living crisis is forcing working-class New Yorkers out of the state at record rates. As legislators, it is our duty to fight for investments in this budget that go beyond gimmicks to meet the moment and expand affordability in a meaningful, long-lasting way. We should pass the Working Families Tax Credit to deliver for our constituents and lift the burden off New Yorkers' shoulders," **said Assemblymember Emily Gallagher.**

"Too many New Yorkers are struggling to make ends meet. Currently, wealthy New Yorkers and corporations are paying less in taxes than working class New Yorkers. With the rising cost of childcare and housing, in addition to inflation, we must pass the Working Families Tax Credit to put money back in the pockets of those who need it most," **said Assemblymember Harvey Epstein.**

"Hardworking families in my district and across New York are struggling with the rising cost of living, and too many parents are being forced to make impossible choices just to get by. The Working Families Tax Credit is a direct investment in the people who keep our communities running—giving parents the support they need to provide for their children, stay in their homes, and build a future here in New York. This is not just about fairness; it's about strengthening our economy and ensuring that every child, no matter their zip code, has a real chance to thrive. We have the opportunity to make a lasting impact, and I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting to get this done in this year's budget," **said Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia.**



“Working-class New Yorkers are struggling to keep up with skyrocketing costs, and the Working Families Tax Credit is a lifeline that will put money directly in their pockets. Families shouldn’t have to choose between rent, food, and childcare—this credit helps ease that burden. Albany must prioritize working people over corporations and the ultra-rich, and expanding this tax credit is a step in the right direction,” **said Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest.**

“At a time when the cost of living continues to rise, the Working Families Tax Credit will help us to invest in the well-being of our communities and make sure every family has the resources to thrive,” **said Assemblymember Grace Lee.** “This tax credit will put hundreds of dollars back into the pockets of families who need it. I join my colleagues in advocating for this much-needed financial support to be included in this year’s state budget.”

“One in five children in New York live in poverty. Our working-class families deserve the best chance we can give them to survive in this cost-of-living crisis, and I’m proud to co-sponsor the Working Families Tax Credit,” **said State Senator Kristen Gonzalez.** “Thank you to Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Hevesi for sponsoring this bill, and I look forward to continuing our efforts to fight child poverty in New York.”

“The Working Families Tax Credit would be an enormous step in leveling the playing field for families in our state,” **said Assemblymember Gabriella Romero** (D,WFP-Albany, Guilderland, New Scotland). “It gives working families the power to decide how to spend their refund, creates a quarterly payment system so they get funds when they need them, and treats families across the state equally – no matter where they live. Increasing the maximum credit to \$1,600, expanding the number and age of eligible children, and raising the income limit would put more money in the pockets of the families at a time when too many are struggling to get by.”

“Working families are the backbone of our communities, yet too many are struggling to make ends meet. The Working Families Tax Credit will provide much-needed relief, helping parents afford essentials like food, rent, and childcare. It’s time for New York to stand with working families and give every child the opportunity to thrive,” **said Assemblyman Manny De Los Santos.**

"Our economy thrives when there is a strong middle class. I stand with my colleagues in the Assembly and Senate to fight for the Working Families Tax Credit in the budget. This is the solution we need to ensure New York is more affordable for our families, build a strong middle class, and make our economy more equitable," **said Assemblymember Harry Bronson, Chair of Assembly Labor Committee.**

“While traditionally skeptical towards tax credit proposals, this is one that I strongly support and is indisputably effective. Prior to expiring, the expanded federal Child Tax Credit single-handedly lifted millions of children out of poverty. Now, in the absence of a federal government that puts our children's well-being first, it is incumbent upon New York State to step in and do the right thing. I applaud Senator Gounardes for championing the Working Families Tax Credit and I look forward to continuing to support its inclusion in the budget,” **said Senator James Skoufis.**

"Passing the Working Families Tax Credit would be a major step forward in making New York State more affordable. It would simplify and streamline a number of different tax provisions to give more families more money, plain and simple. If we want to retain more of the residents we need to power our economy and strengthen our communities, we must pass this legislation as part of this year's budget," **said Assemblymember Dana Levenberg**

“I stand with my colleagues and advocates for the inclusion of the Working Families Tax Credit, with an increased maximum credit and greater accessibility so more families qualify. Many families across the state, particularly in my home of Westchester County, struggle to

meet the expenses of daily living and must make hard sacrifices. The Working Families Tax Credit, as proposed by the Senate, will ease the financial burden many families face. I thank Senator Gounardes for his leadership on this issue and look forward to its inclusion in the final adopted budget,” **said State Senator Shelley B. Mayer.**

“The Working Families Tax Credit is a game-changer for families across New York, providing sustained support that will help lift thousands out of poverty. This investment puts more money in the pockets of those who need it most, giving families greater financial stability and opportunity. I’m grateful to Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Hevesi and the advocates for their leadership in fighting for New York’s working families,” **said Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon.**

“By putting money back into the pockets of people who need it most, the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) offers financial empowerment to hardworking families,” **said Tara Klein, Deputy Director of Policy and Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH).** “Across New York, families continue to face economic hardships daily. While an expansion of the Empire State Child Tax Credit is a welcome proposal, it doesn’t go far enough to strengthen communities and shore up families who are struggling. The WFTC helps more New Yorkers, and that help is more meaningful for the lowest-income families who need it most. UNH will continue to work with our partners—including Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Hevesi—on this important issue.”

“New Yorkers deserve real, sustainable solutions to issues like affordability and child poverty across the state. The Working Families Tax Credit offers exactly that as a permanent benefit to millions of New Yorkers,” **said Anthony Capote, Senior Data and Policy Analyst at the Immigration Research Initiative.** “Instead of putting a bandaid on these issues with temporary expansions on the existing credits, New Yorkers should focus on establishing a long-term fix that will put more money in the pockets of more middle- and working-class families.”

“As much as times are trying for everyone, low- and moderate-income New Yorkers are especially struggling as wages aren’t keeping up with costs. Policies that are thoughtfully designed to make sure everyday working families are supported – like the Working Families Tax Credit, including an expanded Child Tax Credit – are what we need in this challenging moment,” **said Kate Breslin, President and CEO at the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.**

“The Working Families Tax Credit is a bold proposal to give families in New York the support they need to thrive,” **said Pete Nabozny, Director of Policy at The Children’s Agenda.** “This transformative proposal consolidates a confusing array of existing tax benefits for working families into a single, easy to understand credit that will help countless families pay the rent, afford groceries, and buy household essentials like diapers and school supplies. Enacting the Working Families Tax Credit this year will significantly cut child poverty and help make New York the best state to raise a family.”

"Governor Hochul’s plan is a good start, but Albany can and should do more to reduce child poverty and make it easier to raise a family in New York. Enacting the Working Families Tax Credit would mean up to \$1600 per child up to 17 years old to help parents cover rent, childcare, food, or any of the other rising expenses that are making New York less affordable,” **said James Davis, President of the Professional Staff Congress, the union representing 30,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York.**

“Our families are struggling under the weight of poverty and instability, which too often lead to adverse childhood experiences that have lifelong consequences. The Working Family Tax Credit is a critical step toward real relief, ensuring families aren’t punished for earning too little, including ITIN filers who have long been excluded, and providing quarterly payments so parents can afford food, rent, and childcare when they need it most. By expanding eligibility, increasing the credit, and removing harmful caps, this bill acknowledges that

every child deserves a fair chance no matter their family's income. We urge our legislators to stand with working families and pass this bill now," **said Lukee Forbes, Executive Director of We Are Revolutionary.**

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