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Children shortchanged in governor's budget

TOPEKA – Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback's 2013 budget proposal includes measures that would harm children and families if it successfully moves through the legislative process.

The Earned Income Tax Credit faces elimination under the governor's proposed tax plan. The EITC is a refundable income tax credit for low-income working families. It provides an incentive for work and allows parents to pay for basic necessities like housing, utilities and food.

"Elimination of the Earned Income Tax Credit would have a devastating impact on Kansas children and families," said Kansas Action for Children President and CEO Shannon Cotsoradis. "Governor Brownback made a commitment to reduce childhood poverty in his Roadmap for Kansas. Doing away with the EITC flies in the face of that."

In Kansas, more than 90 percent of EITC dollars go to families with children. Studies estimate that if the EITC were eliminated, an additional 4,000 children would fall into poverty.

Other elements of the governor's tax proposal that would negatively impact children and families include elimination of the adoption credit, child and dependent care credit, child day care assistance credit, temporary assistance to families contribution credit and the individual development account credit.

Additionally, the governor's budget proposal assumes less than \$40 million in funding for the Children's Initiatives Fund, a departure from the way monies from Kansas' tobacco settlement agreement have been estimated historically. The CIF supports early childhood programs like Early Head Start, the Infant-Toddler Program (Tiny-k) and Parents as Teachers.

In November, the Kansas Children's Cabinet, of which Cotsoradis is a member, delivered CIF funding recommendations to the governor based on

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an anticipated funding level of \$56 million. Because the governor included less than \$40 million for the CIF in his budget proposal, several programs would receive less funding than the cabinet recommended.

“This is a devastating blow for young children in our state,” said Cotsoradis. “The Children’s Initiatives Fund provides support for important programs that give children the building blocks for success in school and in the workforce. Children and families are being shortchanged by \$16 million without a defensible reason.”