

SHE LEADS JUSTICE

She Leads Justice (SLJ) Formerly named Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, or CWEALF, we are a statewide, nonprofit organization that uses a justice and equity lens to advocate for under-resourced, marginalized women in Connecticut. We work to close the civil legal justice gap, to organize communities for change, and to create state policy that advances women's economic security.

2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

For our state's economy to operate at its fullest potential, we must begin to address the decades of systemic racism, sexism, and economic injustices. SLJ believes we do this by centering the lived experiences, needs, and wisdom of Black women, women of color, and women in poverty in all our policy decisions. Our legislative agenda aims to **(1) build an equitable economy, (2) support women, workers & families, and (3) ensure basic needs are met for all our residents.** We believe these priorities are a crucial starting point in the fight for a more equitable Connecticut.

1. BUILD AN EQUITABLE ECONOMY

SLJ'S 2025 PRIMARY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CHILD TAX CREDIT



She Leads Justice is a leading member of United Way of Connecticut's coalition to institute a permanent and fully refundable child tax credit in CT (CT CTC). CT is a high cost of living state, with regressive tax structures which leads to low-wage and middle-class workers struggling to make ends meet. It is also the only state with a personal income tax that does NOT adjust for family size. Child tax credits are a proven, effective way to combat poverty and inequity- they are also incredibly popular with residents, regardless of status or political affiliation. An effective CT CTC policy will:

- **Be Inclusive:** Benefitting 75% of families in CT- with income eligibility limits at \$100,00 for single filers and \$200,000 for joint filers.
- **Be Meaningful:** Offering qualifying families \$600 per child to help offset costs that can't be covered by other benefits programs.
- **Bring Connecticut in Line with Other States:** CT is now the only state with a personal income tax that does not adjust to help families with the costs of raising children.
- **Support the Economy:** Every dollar returned to families in a CTC generates \$1.38 in spending, helping to grow our state's economy.
- **Offers Peace of Mind:** Alleviates some of the financial stressors associated with the realities of raising children in a high cost of living state.

End Child Poverty Now

We support Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut's agenda to **End Child Poverty Now**. We support legislation that:

- Provides universal no-cost school meals to all students in CT.
- Expands Care4kids child care subsidies for families earning up to 85% of the state's median income.
- Expands just cause evictions to support family housing stability.

Create an Equitable State Budget

We support the Connecticut For All Coalition's efforts to create greater transparency and build equity into our state's budget and tax systems. We support legislation that:

- Makes adjustments to CT's overly strict fiscal controls.
- Works to address our regressive tax systems.
- Prioritizes the funding of critical state programs, services, and departments.



2. SUPPORT WOMEN, WORKERS, AND FAMILIES

Ensure Workers Have Access to Predictable Scheduling

We support Working Families Power's efforts to ensure workers in Connecticut are able to better balance their lives by having reasonable notification of work schedules; including protections against last minute changes and incentives for overtime work.

Protect Paid Family & Medical Leave

We remain steadfast in our dedication to Connecticut's recently enacted Paid Family & Medical Leave policy. We support efforts to protect, expand, and improve access to this vital, life-changing program.

Protect Paid Sick & Safe Days

We are proud to have led the coalition which helped pass Connecticut's updated Paid Sick & Safe Days (PSSD) policy in the 2024 legislative session. We are committed to protecting the PSSD policy, and to ensuring all workers in our state have access to paid sick time. Everyone gets sick and no one should have to choose between recovering from a brief illness and paying their bills.

3. ENSURE BASIC NEEDS ARE MET FOR ALL

Ensure Healthy Futures for All Children

We support the HUSKY Medicaid expansion to all children, including undocumented children and young adults, led by the leadership of the HUSKY for Immigrants.

Strengthen Access to Health Care and Reproductive Freedom

We support policies that advance health equity and justice and ensure all Connecticut residents have access to quality and affordable health care regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, immigration status, race, ethnicity, income, disability, or zip code. This includes measures that remove barriers to accessing abortion and reproductive health care, as well as ones which protect providers of these medical services, including increases to Medicaid reimbursements. We support the leadership of the Coalition for Choice led by Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and Reproductive Equity Now.

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