

# 2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

**She Leads Justice** (SLJ) Formerly named Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, or CWEALF, is 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.

## 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 this is only possible if we center 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

### ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC)

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 that lead to low-wage and middle-class workers struggling to make ends meet. CT 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 Connecticut 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 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.

### WHY A CHILD TAX CREDIT?

CTCs **Support the Economy:** Every \$1 returned to families in a CTC generates \$1.38 in spending, helping our state's economy grow.  
CTCs **Offer Peace of Mind:** CTCs can help alleviate some of the financial stressors associated with raising children in a high cost of living state.  
CTCs **Are Effective:** CTCs are proven to be an effective tool for combatting poverty and inequity.

### End Child Poverty Now

We support Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut's agenda to **End Child Poverty Now, which supports a CT child tax credit and the passage of legislation that:**

- Provides universal no-cost school meals to all students in CT.
- Expands just cause evictions to support family housing stability.

### Create an Equitable State Budget

We support the Connecticut For All Coalition's efforts to **stop the billionaire agenda in CT & build equity into CT's budget and tax systems. We support legislation that:**

- Makes adjustments to CT's overly strict fiscal guardrails.
- Works to address our regressive tax systems.
- Prioritizes the funding of critical state programs, services, and institutions.
- Is pro-worker and pro-union, making CT safer and more affordable for all.

## 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 & Expand Paid Family & Medical Leave

We remain steadfast in our dedication to Connecticut's Paid Family & Medical Leave policy- which allows individuals to take 12 weeks of paid leave for a qualifying reason. 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 CT's updated Paid Sick & Safe Days (PSSD) policy in 2024. 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 are proud to follow the leadership of the HUSKY for Immigrants (H4I) Coalition in their fight to ensure that our state's HUSKY (Medicaid) program is protected and expanded, so all CT residents have access to affordable, holistic healthcare, regardless of age or immigration status.

### Protect & Strengthen Access to Reproductive & Gender-Affirming Healthcare

Reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare are under attack on the federal level, and Connecticut is not immune - It is critical for our state to remain a leader on this issue. We support policies which advance health equity and justice and ensure all CT 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, reproductive health care, gender-affirming care, and policies 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.

### Defend Against Federal Overreach & Attacks on Civil Rights

We support the important work of ACLU Connecticut and their efforts to advance immigrant rights protections, guarantee privacy for data and health information, defend against attacks on civil rights and federal overreach, and expand voting access through no-excuse absentee voting.

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