

Statement from the Responsible Budget Coalition on Renewed Illinois State Budget Negotiations

CHICAGO – John Bouman, President of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and Chair of the Responsible Budget Coalition’s Executive Committee, today released the following statement regarding the renewed budget negotiations by the leadership of the Illinois General Assembly:

“After months of inaction, our elected leaders are getting back to work on the one thing that matters most – putting together a real budget for the State of Illinois.

“Illinois has been stumbling along with a stopgap spending plan that never was more than a device to limp through the election. That plan authorized spending on a partial budget but failed to provide revenue to fund even that spending, nevermind anything close to the level of revenue our government needs for a full budget that meets its responsibilities and invests in our people.

“We have no time to waste. This inadequate stopgap will run out in a few short weeks, leaving many members of Illinois communities without the help they need, because well-respected, well-established local agencies will continue to be without the funding they need to provide the services people count on. This impasse has already caused permanent damage to too many communities across Illinois and the organizations that have served them so well for so many years.. We can’t afford any more of this needless attrition.

“Without a budget, businesses do not know what to expect in Illinois and so they cannot plan. Their willingness to produce jobs here is damaged more by the uncertainty than by any reasonable revenue measures that might actually be in a fully funded budget. A recent poll found that one out of every three Illinois households has been directly affected by the budget crisis, and that’s true in every corner of Illinois. Our elected officials need to understand that this is an issue that crosses county lines and party lines. We are one Illinois, and we need a fully funded, yearlong state budget that works for all of us.

“It’s time for Governor Rauner and our legislative leaders to stop campaigning and start governing, stop squabbling about unrelated political issues and focus on finding ways to bring in new revenues and put our state’s financial house in order. As far as the people of Illinois are concerned, there is one job that precedes anything else: passing a responsible budget together. It’s time to get to work.”

#

The Responsible Budget Coalition (RBC) is a large, diverse non-partisan coalition of more than 300 organizations unified in our support for adequate revenue to pay for vital state services and make smart investments. The Coalition includes organizations that serve children, families, veterans, seniors, immigrant and refugee families and people

with disabilities; education groups concerned about early learning, K-12 and higher education; labor unions, and faith-based and civic groups.