



**Securing Access to Justice:**

***Why New Jersey Needs to Prioritize Legal Representation for Unaccompanied Children***

Today, we need your help more than ever! Join us in advocating for legal representation for unaccompanied children in New Jersey, where the number of released unaccompanied children from federal custody ranks fifth in the United States.

The New Jersey Legislature is currently considering budget requests as they work with the Governor's Proposed Budget for FY2025. We need your support to call on our legislature to restore funding for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program to last year's level. This program ensures that vulnerable children receive quality legal representation and support as they integrate into our communities. Providing these services helps unaccompanied children feel supported and safe, so they can thrive and contribute positively to our communities. With your support, we can continue to make an impact in their lives and create a brighter future for all children who call New Jersey home.

□ **Here's what you need to know**

♦ [Governor Murphy's proposed 2025 budget](#) includes \$4.5 million in funding for the legal services to unaccompanied children to provide legal representation and case management to unaccompanied children and similarly situated youth living in New Jersey. **This is a reduced level of funding** from last year's passed budget which included \$7.5 million for this program. With the increasing number of children and youth released to families in our state, we need to develop a pipeline of high-quality advocates who can provide the necessary legal services and the support to these vulnerable children. With robust support of this program, we believe that we can make a real difference in the lives of unaccompanied children in New Jersey. To achieve this, we are calling on the NJ legislature to **restore funding to the full \$7.5 million level**, by including an additional \$3 million budget resolution for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program. This is essential to ensure that children receive the quality legal representation they need in their removal defense, as well as the necessary capacity building and training for current and future legal providers.



**How you can help**

- [Contact your lawmakers](#) - sample messaging [here](#)
- [Share the opportunity for action with your friends and family](#)

## **Contact your lawmakers**

Call or email your Budget and Appropriations Leaders and urge them to support renewed and increased funding for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program

Senator Sarlo, Paul	<a href="mailto:SenSarlo@njleg.org">SenSarlo@njleg.org</a>	(201) 804-8118
Senator Greenstein, Linda	<a href="mailto:SenGreenstein@njleg.org">SenGreenstein@njleg.org</a>	(609) 395-9911
Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin	<a href="mailto:Aswpintormarin@njleg.org">Aswpintormarin@njleg.org</a>	(973) 589-0713
Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly	<a href="mailto:AsmWimberly@njleg.org">AsmWimberly@njleg.org</a>	(973) 925-7061

### **Sample Script 1 (for contacting their own legislator):**

Hello,

My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm contacting you as a constituent and community advocate to ask for your support for renewing the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program at its current funding. We are seeking a \$3 million increase from the proposed budget to keep funding at \$7.5 million for this program. Keeping the current funding level is essential to ensure unaccompanied children living across the entire state have access to expert legal representation in their defense against deportation back to dangerous conditions, as well as providing social services support to give them a fair opportunity to integrate into their communities and thrive in New Jersey. Your support and co-sponsorship of this resolution is vital to the continued provision of these services. Including full funding at \$7.5 million for this program in the final budget will ensure children in our state have a meaningful chance for safe and healthy lives in New Jersey.

Can we count on your support for this budget resolution?


### **Sample Script 2 (if contacting the budget chairs/vice chairs):**

Hello **[Legislator Name]**,

My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm reaching out today as a community advocate to ask for your support to fully fund the renewal of the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program. The resolution seeks a \$3 million increase from the proposed budget to keep funding at \$7.5 million for this program. Access to quality legal representation and social services are essential to ensuring that unaccompanied immigrant children living in our state have a fair opportunity to integrate into their communities and thrive in New Jersey. Your support and co-sponsorship of this resolution is crucial. I urge you to take action and support this budget resolution. Thank you for your time.

## Share on Social Media

- Check out the sample posts below and make them yours.
- Download the images
- Tag friends, family, and influencers in your posts to amplify the message.

Sample Posts	Images
<p>#InvestInNJYouth and ensure unaccompanied children in NJ have access to quality legal representation. Maintain funding for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program at \$7.5 million! #NJBudget</p> <p>@sensarlo @SenGreenstein @AswPintorMarin @BenjieWimberly</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>To download images</b> <a href="#"><b>CLICK HERE</b></a></p> 
<p>No child should be without legal representation in their removal defense. Join us in calling for maintaining the current \$7.5 million funding for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program! #InvestInNJYouth</p> <p>@sensarlo @SenGreenstein @AswPintorMarin @BenjieWimberly</p>	
<p>Unaccompanied children are coming to NJ seeking a better life. Invest in their future: provide them legal representation! Urge legislators to support the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program! #InvestInNJYouth</p> <p>@sensarlo @SenGreenstein @AswPintorMarin @BenjieWimberly</p>	
<p>Every child deserves access to quality legal representation, especially those who have fled their homes. Advocate maintaining the \$7.5 million for the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program! #InvestInNJYouth</p> <p>@sensarlo @SenGreenstein @AswPintorMarin @BenjieWimberly</p>	

Join the [New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children](#) to Advocate for our communities!