

Family Economic Stability

Iowa's welfare reform efforts have reduced the number of families on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program by more than one-half, with many of those families now in the workforce. At the same time, many of these families have moved from being on welfare to being among the "working poor," still struggling to make ends meet. Children continue to be the age group in Iowa most likely to be poor, and even temporary poverty has been shown to have long-term impacts upon children. One in seven children live below the poverty level and one in three below 185% of the poverty level (a more realistic measure of child financial security). Although Iowa has a small earned income tax credit, over 70,000 low-income working families (below 185% of poverty) owe state income taxes, which contributes to their financial stress, although they are not taxed at the federal level.

As Governor, what will you do to address child poverty, including further changes to Iowa's welfare system, its supports for working low-income families, and its tax treatment of families with children?



BRANSTAD: One of the goals of my campaign is to raise the incomes of Iowa families by 25%. Crucial to this goal is to support retraining programs for those Iowans who have lost their

employment in these challenging economic times. It will also be my goal to provide some financial assistance to encourage low-income adults to gain additional post-secondary education at any level to gain skills to allow them to better support their families.



CULVER: The Culver/Judge Administration expanded Iowa's earned income tax credit in 2007, making the state tax credit available to more than 85,000 additional Iowans. This credit,

along with the increase I signed to Iowa's minimum wage, has helped working Iowa families pay their bills and save for the future. Other changes such as expanded eligibility for hawk-i and the dental-only carve out help struggling families provide their children with the healthcare they need. Similarly, the state voluntary preschool program, which I have pledged to expand, and the state Empowerment program provide educational opportunities for the children of Iowa families. In my second term, I will continue to work to address poverty by making sure that every Iowa child has health insurance and by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to further assist working families.