

### **Begin the Year With Action**

With the impending inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump and confirmation hearings for his Cabinet selections underway, the political attention of the nation is focused squarely on Washington, D.C. As the Trump administration gets established and plans start to emerge from the new Congress, it is becoming clear that significant changes to federal domestic programs are likely. How these changes will impact children and families is a huge concern for child advocates across the nation. Michigan's Children will continue to monitor all of the proposals as they work their way through Congress and advocate on behalf of children and families in Michigan who would be affected. As always, we will be a resource for advocates throughout Michigan as we strive to make sure children and families who face the most significant challenges are protected from harm.

Despite all of the attention and focus on our federal government, it is important for us to remember that the 99<sup>th</sup> Michigan Legislature was sworn in on Wednesday. As Governor Snyder enters his final two years in office, he will once again be working with a legislature controlled by his own party, with Republicans holding a 63-47 majority in the House of Representatives and a 27-11 majority in the state Senate. There are a total of 43 brand new legislators starting their first terms with 42 new House members and 1 new Senator.

Governor Snyder will present his budget proposal for the next fiscal year to the Legislature in early February and this will kick off what is known in advocacy circles as the "budget season". The "budget season" provides an excellent opportunity for child advocates to let their state legislators know that they expect them to prioritize state spending on programs that will help children and families thrive in Michigan. The Legislature and Governor Snyder will determine how over \$50 billion in state revenues will be spent next year. Despite its importance, because the budget process is unfamiliar to many, and moves very quickly, it has been difficult for parents, teachers, service providers and others to become involved. Even before the busy budget season gets underway, make sure that you are reaching out to your lawmakers to talk to them about the programs and services in your community that families rely on. If people throughout the state who care about children, youth and families let them know their priorities, we can make sure that wise investments into programs that will benefit children of all ages will be made.

[Take a look at the budget process timelines and best places for impact.](#)

[Find out more about what Michigan's Children is talking with Legislators about.](#)

[Build your advocacy skills in preparation for the challenging year ahead.](#)

*Matt Gillard is the President & CEO of Michigan's Children, the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children from cradle to career and their families.*