



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
TREASURER SHAWN T. WOODEN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday October 28, 2021

CONTACTS: Office of Connecticut State Treasurer Wooden, Michelle.Woods-Matthews@ct.gov, (860) 502-5499; and Connecticut Hospital Association, Jill McDonald Halsey, McDonaldHalsey@chime.org, (203) 294-7213

**TREASURER WOODEN
AND SENATOR MARILYN MOORE
KICK OFF STATEWIDE CT BABY BONDS
EDUCATION TOUR AT
THE ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

*HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS
HELP TO SPREAD THE WORD: CT BABY BONDS
WILL BENEFIT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE*

Bridgeport, CT. – Today, Connecticut State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden and State Senator Marilyn Moore toured the Alliance for Community Empowerment to kick off Treasurer Wooden’s statewide CT Baby Bonds education tour. CT Baby Bonds became the first-of-its-kind program to be enacted in the nation on July 1, and now Treasurer Wooden is working with healthcare providers and community organizations from across the state to reach expectant mothers, whose children will qualify for the program. Healthcare providers and community organizations understand that CT Baby Bonds is a long-term investment in families, communities, and the state. Treasurer Wooden and Senator Moore were joined by Dr. Monette M. Ferguson, the Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Engagement, Janet Stolfi Alfano, the Executive Director of The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, expectant mothers whose pregnancies qualify for CT Baby Bonds, as well as Bill Hoey, the VP, and Chief Mission Integration Officer at St. Vincent’s Medical Center, Dr. Manisha Gupta, the Medical Director of the Bridgeport Hospital Primary Care Center, and representatives from the Connecticut Hospital Association.

“CT Baby Bonds is a long-term investment in families, in communities, and our economy,” said Connecticut State Treasurer Shawn Wooden. “I am grateful the program has the support of the

Connecticut Hospital Association, as well as strong community partners, including the Alliance for Community Empowerment and the Diaper Bank of Connecticut, who are committed to helping people thrive at every stage in life. Whether it's by helping a child and their family gain access to affordable childcare, clean diapers, a safe and healthy learning environment, or affordable high-quality health care, together, all of these programs and resources open the door to help those born into poverty secure economic opportunities throughout their lives and in the future."

CT Baby Bonds was enacted on July 1, 2021, and creates a trust for children born into poverty, whose births are covered by the State's Medicaid program. In the year of their birth, funds will be set aside in a Trust. When a beneficiary is between the ages of 18 and 30 and completes a financial education requirement, the funds can be used for targeted eligible purposes that, supported by research, will help close the racial wealth gap. These purposes include: educational expenses, the purchase of a home in Connecticut, investing in a business in Connecticut, and contributing towards retirement savings.

"My mission is to continuously seek equity especially in educational opportunities for children growing up in poverty and who often do not consider higher education or becoming a homeowner," said Senator Marilyn Moore. "CT Baby Bonds not only creates a path to education but gives children and their parents real hope for a better life. They will promote economic growth and equity across Connecticut communities by creating a pathway to addressing the racial wealth gap. I am thankful to State Treasurer Shawn Wooden for his vision in creating this opportunity for low-income families."

The Alliance for Community Empowerment, "The Alliance" is partnering with Treasurer Wooden's office to help get the word out about CT Baby Bonds to its members. The Alliance works to strengthen and empower people in need by addressing the causes and conditions of people living in poverty in Connecticut. They provide individuals, families, and communities with the appropriate tools, skills, and opportunities needed for economic stability and self-sufficiency. Their services prioritize the health and safety of children, and families. They serve more than 35,000 individuals annually through their broad range of services in Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Norwalk, Stratford, Trumbull, and Westport, Connecticut.

"The Alliance is excited to participate in the kickoff of Treasurer Wooden's CT Baby Bonds education tour to ensure families in poverty have a head start in life," said Dr. Monette M. Ferguson, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Empowerment. "Parents can plan forward and visualize this investment in their children's future thanks to the insight of our state leaders and legislators. The Alliance is perfectly positioned to be a partner with other community resource providers to assist families on their journey to dream beyond their financial circumstances of today."

"As an expecting mother of a newborn baby girl 'Keyalah,' I'm grateful to the state for coming up with CT Baby Bonds and giving greater financial opportunity to my child, allowing her to have a head start to a better future," Shakera Dix, Expectant mother whose child will qualify for CT Baby Bonds. "I think this is a great opportunity for many children in the community, who will one day be able to achieve their goals in life as they get older."

The Diaper Bank of Connecticut is also partnering with Treasurer Wooden's office to spread the word about CT Baby Bonds. The Diaper Bank of Connecticut provides free diapers for babies and toddlers living in low-income and low-wage families, many of whom struggle to afford the most basic needs required to keep children clean, dry, and healthy. Since its founding in 2004, the organization has supported more than 39,500 children ages three and younger who live in families at or below 200 percent of the federal

poverty level in the State of Connecticut. Providing access to a reliable supply of clean diapers enables parents to take their child to daycare, maintain employment and continue to earn a paycheck. It also improves the health and well-being of children.

The Diaper Bank of Connecticut is committed to investing in the health and economic stability of babies and their families,” said Janet Stolfi Alfano, Executive Director of The Diaper Bank of Connecticut. “We are proud that Connecticut is choosing to invest in the future of the state’s children with CT Baby Bonds, working to break the cycle of poverty for generations of families and diminish long-standing wealth disparities that exist in our state.”

While the first beneficiaries of the CT Baby Bonds program won’t be eligible to receive the funds until the year 2039, research shows that this type of program will have a positive impact on beneficiaries, earlier in their lives. Research completed in March by Washington University in St. Louis found that efforts to create savings accounts for newborns for higher education purposes had large positive impacts on both account holders’ financial outcomes, as well as their behavior earlier than when they received the funds. The beneficiaries experienced higher graduation rates, had greater behavioral expectations about higher education and had improved their ability to save for their future earlier on in their lives. Additional research completed by Saint Louis University in 2013, which also focused on the effects of creating a higher education savings account for newborns found positive effects on the social-emotional development for children as early as four years of age. These studies reinforce the long-term benefits of CT Baby Bonds for beneficiaries concerning their financial and social-emotional well-being.

“We believe the CT Baby Bonds program can not only narrow the wealth gap among our citizens, it can also increase graduation rates in our community, leading to increased financial stability and higher education rates,” Dr. Manisha Gupta, Medical Director of the Bridgeport Hospital Primary Care Center. This will help close many of the social determinants of health gaps in housing, food and job insecurity.”

“St. Vincent’s is a strong supporter of CT Baby Bonds, and just as that program is an investment in the fiscal health of children, contributing to wealth equity, St. Vincent’s invests in the physical health of children, to increase health equity,” Bill Hoey, the VP, and Chief Mission Integration Officer at St. Vincent’s Medical Center. “As a part of our mission, we run programs that enhance the medical health of our residents, such as initiatives to increase food security, and we are honored to participate with CT Baby Bonds, as part of that same mission.”

###

About CT Baby Bonds:

Connecticut is the only state in the nation to pass a Baby Bonds program. The program will create a trust for children born into poverty and covered by HUSKY—the State’s Medicaid program. In the year of their birth, funds will be set aside in a Trust. When a beneficiary is between the ages of 18 and 30 and completes a financial education requirement, the funds can be used for targeted eligible purposes that, supported by research, will help close the racial wealth gap. These purposes include: educational expenses, the purchase of a home in Connecticut, investing in a business in Connecticut, and contributing

towards retirement savings. This program will be funded through State-issued General Obligation bonds, with \$50 million per year authorized for 12 years beginning in 2021, totaling \$600 million.

About the Office of the State Treasurer:

Under the leadership of Connecticut's State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden, the Office of the Treasurer is dedicated to safeguarding the state's financial resources and taxpayers' dollars, while maximizing returns and minimizing risks for pension beneficiaries and operating at the highest professional and ethical standards. Through investments and cash management, the office continues to enhance the state's fiscal stability, financial literacy, college savings, and its approach to leveraging business partnerships to combat social issues such as gun violence, climate change, and equal opportunity for economic growth. Learn more about the Office of the Treasurer [here](#) and follow along on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).