



Erick Russell

CONNECTICUT STATE TREASURER

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SEN. CORY BOOKER, TREAS. ERICK RUSSELL HOLD ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON “BABY BONDS”

New Haven, CT – U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) visited Connecticut on Saturday, joining Treasurer Erick Russell for a roundtable discussion on “Baby Bonds,” an innovative policy that invests in children at birth in an effort to combat systemic poverty and generate economic opportunity.

Sen. Booker, a long-time advocate for the program, has introduced the *American Opportunity Accounts Act*, a national “Baby Bonds” initiative that would deposit \$1,000 into a savings account for every American child at birth. Additional contributions would be made depending on a family’s income level, providing critical resources to fight generational poverty and close the nation’s wealth gap.

In 2021, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to pass a “Baby Bonds” law. The state program, named CT Baby Bonds, would invest \$3,200 on behalf of each Connecticut child born into poverty. Those funds would grow over time and become available when participants reach adulthood. Treasurer Russell has been working with lawmakers to secure initial funding to ensure those investments begin as scheduled with the first eligible babies to be born this July.

“America’s upside-down tax code is great at preserving and building wealth for corporations and already wealthy families, but it fails Americans who are barely getting by and are unable to afford long-term investments in themselves to get ahead. This growing wealth gap prevents people from accessing homeownership, funding a college education, starting a business, or making other long-term investments. Baby Bonds is an evidence-based approach that holds incredible promise in creating economic opportunity for all and providing every child with a chance to realize their full potential. I’m proud to see states like Connecticut establish baby bonds programs and look forward to seeing the transformative impact the program will have in breaking generational cycles of poverty and lifting all families,” said **Senator Cory Booker**.

“CT Baby Bonds will help achieve our shared vision for a future that includes economic opportunity for all of our children,” said **Treasurer Erick Russell**. “I’m grateful for Sen. Booker’s tireless advocacy for baby bonds, his deeply held commitment to economic justice and his willingness to support our state as

we implement the program and secure the funding necessary to begin these transformative investments in Connecticut's kids.”

In both the national and state programs, funds would be available to participants beginning at age 18 for targeted uses that help build wealth, including buying a home or paying for education.

A chronic and widening wealth gap in Connecticut, and across the country, has cut off pathways of economic advancement. “Baby Bonds” is designed to level the playing field, creating access to capital for young people regardless of the financial status of their families. While originally envisioned as a tool to secure individual financial independence, the impact of the program will radiate throughout communities, encouraging young people to invest and build their futures in the places they already live.

“If we are going to reduce our nation’s wealth gaps, we must start at birth providing future generations with the solid financial footing to achieve their educational, business, or homeownership goals,” said **Senator Richard Blumenthal**. “I will keep fighting for passage of our federal Baby Bonds legislation with Senator Booker as well as the legislation I am leading to make these bonds tax exempt to ensure a greater impact of these funds. I am proud to support these initiatives and very pleased to see Treasurer Russell undertaking similar efforts in Connecticut.”

“Establishing a baby bond program here in Connecticut, which I testified in strong support for, is a path forward to providing a strong financial foundation so every child can not only succeed, but thrive,” said **Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro**. “I am proud to join my colleagues in the Congress, Senator Booker and Congresswoman Pressley, on making this a nationwide reality as a cosponsor of the American Opportunity Accounts Act. From birth, every child deserves a savings account, known as ‘baby bonds,’ that would give them a fairer chance at life. A baby bonds program gives our children a foundation to be in a better place for economic mobility, will help assist in closing the racial wealth gap, breaking cycles of poverty, and building up a generation in America. We must continue to fight for programs that I have long advocated for like Paid Family and Medical Leave and an expanded and improved Child Tax Credit to give every family a chance in this country.”

Participants in the roundtable included community leaders in the New Haven area that emphasized the potential of the program in supporting families, bolstering the local economy, and breaking cycles of generational poverty. In addition to supporting young people with financial resources, the programs present an opportunity to improve financial literacy and assist young families.

Panelists included: David Addams, Executive Director, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund; Emily Byrne, Executive Director, Connecticut Voices for Children; Erik Clemons, founding CEO and President of the Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology (ConnCAT); Karen DuBois-Walton, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven; and Will Ginsberg, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

To learn more about Sen. Booker’s proposal, visit: <https://www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/booker-pressley-reintroduce-bicameral-baby-bonds-legislation-to-tackle-wealth-inequality>

More information on CT Baby Bonds can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/OTT/Debt-Management/CT-Baby-Bonds>

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