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Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Taking Action to End Poverty

PRESS RELEASE

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Ensuring Success in School Act Signed by Governor

(Chicago) – Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed the Ensuring Success in Schools Act (ESSA) today. The purpose of this new law is still to ensure that children and youth who are parents, expectant parents or the victims of domestic or sexual violence stay in school, stay safe while in school and complete their education.

The law has two main provisions. The first creates the Ensuring Success in School Task Force, which will develop policies, procedures and protocols to be implemented by school districts. The second provision requires a biannual in-service training for school personnel on the needs of students who are expectant or parenting, or victims of domestic or sexual violence.

The Women's Law and Policy Project (WLPP) at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law collaborated with representatives of school districts, teachers, children and youth advocates and social service providers and the Illinois State Board of Education to produce this law. The chief sponsors of the legislation, Rep. Karen Yarbrough (D) in the House and Sen. Iris Martinez (D) in the Senate, were critical allies throughout the legislative process.

Wendy Pollack, director of the WLPP, applauded the governor's action, saying, "The signing of this legislation is a giant step forward in addressing the barriers to successful school completion for too many of our youth." Pollack added, "Now it is up to the Ensuring Success in School Task Force to ensure that those barriers are removed."

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The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, a national resource, champions law and policy promoting equal opportunity and support for low-income individuals, families, and communities so that they can escape poverty permanently.