

For Immediate Release

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AACF Statement on Proposed Severance Tax Increase

By Rich Huddleston, Executive Director
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families applauds Governor Beebe for his leadership on this important issue. A significant increase in Arkansas's severance tax is long overdue and through the Governor's proposal, will have a real impact on the economic well-being of Arkansas's working families.

At Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, our main priority is to ensure that our state's working families have the resources they need to provide for their families, and it's essential that we do this in the fairest way possible. An increase in the natural gas severance tax may be the fairest and most likely way of raising new revenue to meet critical state budget needs.

While our first preference is usually that any new revenue be used to pay for essential programs impacting our most vulnerable children and families (*e.g.* Medicaid, P-12 education, subsidized child care, child welfare, juvenile justice, etc.), we recognize that the governor's proposed use for the revenue will help meet other important budget needs, help preserve funding for critical parts of the state budget impacting vulnerable families, and have a direct impact on the economic well-being of all Arkansans.

As a research based organization, we will be closely examining the proposal and watching its legislative progress. We urge the Legislature to take positive steps toward completing this historic agreement.

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