



DISCIPLES MISSION WEEK · WEBINAR RESOURCE SHEET

Healthcare Equity: How Are the Children?

With Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson and Moderated by Rev. Chris Dorsey · September 9, 2026

Every organization, program, study, person, and scripture referred to in this webinar, gathered in one place. Click any underlined title to open it. Items tagged **MENTIONED** were named during the webinar. Items tagged **LEARN MORE** are trusted sources on a topic the speakers raised.

NIGHT 1
Food Insecurity

NIGHT 2 ·
TONIGHT
Healthcare
Equity

NIGHT 3
Housing
Insecurity

NIGHT 4
Disability Equity

Speaker & Moderator

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson

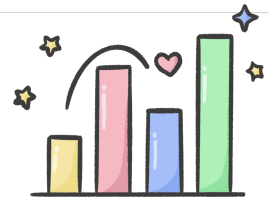
Speaker. President & CEO, Children's Defense Fund and CDF Action Council; Board Chair, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Duke Divinity School.

Rev. Dr. Chris Dorsey

Moderator. President & CEO, Disciples Home Missions.

By the Numbers

Figures as cited during the webinar.



73M

children in America,
which Dr. Wilson calls his
“youth group”

Source: Rev. Dr. Starsky
Wilson

1.5M

children in 22 states lost
food aid in the year after
H.R. 1

Source: Center on Budget
and Policy Priorities

\$187B

in cuts to SNAP

Source: Rev. Dr. Starsky
Wilson

\$1T

taken out of Medicaid

Source: Rev. Dr. Starsky
Wilson

2M

children dropped from
Medicaid and CHIP rolls

Source: Children’s Defense
Fund, cited by Rev. Dorsey

12,500

CDF Freedom School
scholars served this
summer

Source: Children’s Defense
Fund

“How Are the Children?": A Litmus Test for a Nation’s Health

Dr. Wilson argued that the best measure of a nation’s health is how its children are doing. Since 2020, most children in America have been children of color, so equity and race must be part of that measure. He made the case through four voices.

THE POET

June Jordan

*“Children are the
ways that the
world begins
again and again.”*

THE PRESIDENT

Nelson Mandela

*“No keener
revelation of a
society’s soul than
the way it treats
its children.”*

THE PREACHER

**Rev. Dr. Prathia
Hall**

*“The standard of
your faith is how
you regard
children.”*

THE SAVIOR

Jesus

*“Let the little
children come to
me ... for of such is
the kingdom of
heaven.”*



SECTION 1

The Speaker's Organizations

Where Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson serves and has served.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)

President & CEO: Founded in 1973, CDF builds community so young people grow up with dignity, hope, and joy. It has 130 team members in 11 locations, does policy advocacy in Washington, D.C. and state capitals, and organizes with faith communities.

childrensdefense.org

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Board Chair: The largest U.S. philanthropy focused on health. It invests in community organizing, policy advocacy, and narrative strategy toward a **Culture of Health** where health is a right, not a privilege.

rwjf.org



Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson



Chris Dorsey



SECTION 2

Children's Defense Fund Programs & Campaigns

Ways Dr. Wilson invited congregations to take part.

National Observance of Children's Sabbaths

MENTIONED

Held every year on the third weekend in October (October 16–18, 2026). CDF provides a manual for worship, learning, and advocacy about children's issues in congregational life.

childrensdefense.org

CDF Freedom Schools

MENTIONED

A summer literacy and servant-leadership program that served about 12,500 scholars this year, some through Disciples congregations.

childrensdefense.org

Reading Aloud for Democracy ("R.A.D.")

MENTIONED

Public read-alouds with Freedom School partners during Children's Sabbath weekend, alongside a national get-out-the-early-vote push.

childrensdefense.org

Voter Action Guide - CDF & Black Church PAC

MENTIONED

A guide with sample scripts and step-by-step instructions to check your voter registration status, for individuals and congregations.

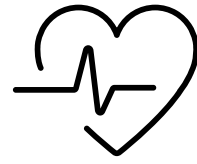
blackchurchpac.org





SECTION 3

Health Policy, Programs & Data



The research and policies behind the numbers.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

MENTIONED

Source of the finding that about 1.5 million children in 22 states had food aid restricted in the year since H.R. 1 passed.

cbpp.org

H.R. 1 (119th Congress, 2025)

MENTIONED

The law Dr. Wilson called the “One Big Beautiful Bill.” It cut about \$187 billion from SNAP and about \$1 trillion from Medicaid, with more changes shifting to states in October and after December 31.

congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

MENTIONED

Federal food aid. Dr. Wilson urged asking officials to restore the cuts.

fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program

Medicaid

MENTIONED

Public health coverage for low-income children and families.

medicaid.gov

CHIP / Insure Kids Now

The Children’s Health Insurance Program.

insurekidsnow.gov



MENTIONED

KFF – Health Policy Research

LEARN MORE

Nonpartisan explainers on Medicaid changes, coverage losses, and options such as single-payer and “Medicare for All” proposals.

kff.org



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

MENTIONED

Dr. Wilson asked congregations to raise the dismantling of public health infrastructure with elected officials.

[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Oversees public health. Some Department of Education functions are being shifted here.

[hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)



MENTIONED

U.S. Department of Education

MENTIONED

Funding and staffing cuts affect school-based health services and oversight.

[ed.gov](https://www.ed.gov)

School-Based Health Alliance

LEARN MORE

The national organization for school-based health centers, which Dr. Wilson highlighted as a key source of care for children.

sbh4all.org

National School Lunch Program

MENTIONED

School meals. Dr. Wilson argued it is cheaper and less shaming to feed every child.

fns.usda.gov/nslp

FRAC – Healthy School Meals for All

LEARN MORE

National research and advocacy on universal free school meals.

frac.org

Child Tax Credit

MENTIONED

The expanded pandemic-era credit Dr. Wilson noted has ended. He also noted the U.S. is the only English-speaking industrialized nation without a regular child or family allowance.

irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/child-tax-credit

Healthy People 2030 – Social Determinants of Health

LEARN MORE

How education, income, neighborhood, and environment shape health, central to Dr. Wilson's framing.

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

The Commonwealth Fund – Mirror, Mirror

[LEARN MORE](#)

International comparisons showing the U.S. pays more for health care with worse outcomes.

commonwealthfund.org

“Policy is a poverty choice.”

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson



SECTION 4

Voting Rights & Civic Engagement

“Voting rights are children’s rights.” – Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson

Louisiana v. Callais (U.S. Supreme Court)

[MENTIONED](#)

The voting rights and redistricting decision that prompted CDF and 275 Black-led organizations to mobilize in Montgomery and Selma in May.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_v._Callais

Dr. Nadia Brown – Georgetown University

[MENTIONED](#)

Chair of Women’s and Gender Studies, whose research shows Black women legislators are especially likely to advance children’s and families’ interests.

<https://gufaculty360.georgetown.edu/s/contact/0031Q00002QQ02IQAT/nadia-brown>

Vote.org – Am I Registered?

[LEARN MORE](#)

Check your registration, then check again.

vote.org/am-i-registered-to-vote



Bolder Advocacy

[LEARN MORE](#)

What congregations and 501(c)(3)s can do on voter engagement and issue advocacy while staying nonpartisan.

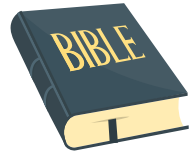
<https://afj.org/bolder-advocacy/>





SECTION 5

Voices & Scripture Dr. Wilson Quoted



His “How are the children?” framing drew on a poet, a president, a preacher, and the Savior.

June Jordan

MENTIONED

Black feminist poet. Her 1978 address to the Child Welfare League of America is the source of CDF’s theme this year.

poetryfoundation.org/poets/june-jordan

Child Welfare League of America

MENTIONED

The convention where June Jordan spoke in 1978.

cwla.org

Nelson Mandela

MENTIONED

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

nelsonmandela.org

Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall

MENTIONED

SNCC organizer, Philadelphia pastor, and co-chair of CDF’s Black Church Initiative. “The standard of your faith is how you regard children.”

snccdigital.org/people/prathia-hall

“Let the little children come to me”

MENTIONED

Matthew 19:13–15, Mark 10:13–16, and Luke 18:15–17. Jesus places children at the center of the reign of God.

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A13-15%3B+Ma...

Feeding miracles & healing stories

MENTIONED

Mark 6:30–44 and Matthew 4:23–25. The basis for Dr. Wilson’s call to advocate on food and health care as Christian responsibility.

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3A30-44%3B+Mathe...



The parable of the sower

MENTIONED

Matthew 13:1-9. Marian Wright Edelman's theory of change.
biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13%3A1-9&version...

“We serve a God who created out of chaos ... let's build a radically inclusive new system of health as a right for all.”

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson



SECTION 6

Congregations & Places Leading the Way



Examples Dr. Wilson and Rev. Dorsey lifted up.

Undue Medical Debt (formerly RIP Medical Debt)

LEARN MORE

A nonprofit that buys medical debt for pennies on the dollar and forgives it. This is the model St. Louis congregations used to relieve neighbors' debt.
unduemedicaldebt.org

Christ the King United Church of Christ, Florissant, MO

MENTIONED

Under Rev. Traci Blackmon, it organized several congregations to buy and forgive medical debt.
<https://ctk-ucc.org/>

Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Rockville, MD

MENTIONED

Its men partner with the county on men's health fairs, health communities, and state-level advocacy.
<https://mtcbc.org/>

Centennial Christian Church, St. Louis, MO

MENTIONED

A Disciples congregation that, under Rev. Derrick Perkins, secured grants for community health care and programs.
<https://www.cccstl.org/>



Friendship-West Baptist Church, Dallas

Host of a Freedom Summer justice revival where Dr. Wilson preached.
friendshipwest.org

Xavier University of Louisiana

Graduates more black physicians and pharmacists than any other school in the country.
xula.edu



SECTION 7

From Disciples Home Missions

Stay connected after the webinar.

Disciples Mission HUB

More healthcare equity resources, plus a place for congregations and individuals to connect.
disciplesmissionhub.org

Disciples Home Missions

Host of the first Disciples Mission Week, a week of education, volunteering, and worship.
discipleshomemissions.org



Chris Dorsey



Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson



12 Ideas for Congregations



Practical next steps drawn from the conversation.

- 1 **Observe Children's Sabbath.** Use CDF's manual for worship, learning, and advocacy on October 16-18.
- 2 **Host a Freedom School.** Partner with CDF on summer literacy and servant leadership.
- 3 **Check your registration, then check again.** Share the voter action guide and its QR code.
- 4 **Ask at every town hall.** Ask candidates about SNAP, Medicaid, and public health funding.
- 5 **Vote for those who can't.** Remember the 73 million children who have no vote.
- 6 **Buy and forgive medical debt.** Pool funds with other congregations through a debt-relief nonprofit.
- 7 **Start a health community.** Hold health fairs and peer groups in partnership with your county.
- 8 **Advocate together at the state level.** Turn shared health concerns into policy change.
- 9 **Seek grants.** Fund health care and programs for your neighborhood.
- 10 **Change the narrative.** Challenge ideas of who "deserves" health. No one does narrative better than the church.
- 11 **Preach the feeding and healing stories.** Treat them as a call to action today.
- 12 **Join the early-vote push.** Host a Reading Aloud for Democracy event.

Keep the conversation going...

Join **DisciplesMissionHub.org** to connect with congregations and individuals working on food insecurity.



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