



# THE COMMITTEE OF 100

## FYI

April 12, 2016

### **Wilmington Schools Should be Part of Anti-Poverty Debate**

*The Committee of 100 supports WEIC redistricting plan*

Senate Republicans recently unveiled an 11-point plan to combat inter-generational poverty in Delaware and deserve a lot of credit for stepping forward on the issue. Not all the ideas will become law, but some will and all deserve an honest debate. The objective is to make Delaware the lowest poverty state in the nation by 2024.

The Committee of 100 agrees that the focus should shift from simply easing the hardship of poverty to breaking the cycle of poverty entirely. And what is the single most effective tool in doing that? Education.

There will be a vote this spring in the General Assembly on an issue that we believe should be considered part of the state's anti-poverty agenda. That issue is the redistricting plan of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) and approval of the funding needed to implement all the recommendations of the Commission's report.

In 2024, today's 6 year-old first graders in Wilmington will be 14 and about to enter high school in the fall. Which road will they be on? On a track to finish school with career or college-ready skills prepared to contribute to society, or on a track to a life of dependency in the social service system or the criminal justice system? We know the high costs of those systems, not to mention the human costs of broken families and lost opportunity, or the societal costs of crime and violence. The WEIC report suggests that we try something different; let's make sure we give today's generation the tools to be independent.

We now know that kids who live in poverty face higher hurdles to learning than others. They may come to school hungry, may have untreated medical issues, may have less stable family situations – moving frequently and getting less consistent mentoring at home (if any). These difficulties grow with each successive generation that lives in poverty.

This means that for those kids, simple access to school, without additional support services, is not equal access to educational opportunity. They are behind at the start and never catch up. We often hear it said that America does not guarantee equal outcomes, but does promise equal opportunity. It is time we live up to that promise in education.

Wilmington is certainly not the only place in Delaware with high concentrations of poverty. We believe added resources for schools with kids living in poverty should be available statewide. But if we can't accomplish that larger goal right away, we still should start someplace, and Wilmington is most in need.

Poverty and its offspring – high unemployment, crime, and violence – are threats to the well-being of our state's economic capital. Giving Wilmington's schoolkids an equal shot at a good education will be one of the most important steps we take in breaking the cycle of poverty, and in ensuring the economic well-being of Delaware in the future.

Don't say we can't afford it. We can't afford not to.

Paul H. Morrill, Jr.  
Executive Director

### **April Member Reception and Annual Meeting**

Plan to join your colleagues for the next C100 Member Reception on Tuesday, April 19th from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the University & Whist Club. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, cash bar and good company. The Reception will follow a very brief Annual Meeting of the members of The Committee of 100.

The Board of Directors encourages you to take advantage of the low-cost format to bring along additional associates in your organization, as well as potential members, as your guests. At only \$25 per person, it is an affordable way to introduce younger business professionals to the networking power of The Committee of 100.

Register today at [April 2016 Reception Registration!](#) Please note the new section on the Registration Form where you can “round-up” your reception fee to donate \$5 to the Committee of 100 Scholarship Fund.

**Save The Date**

**Committee of 100 Annual Auction  
December 7, 2016  
Hotel Du Pont Gold Ballroom**