

# National Meeting Summary

## Welcome and Introduction of Guest Speaker

Meredith Dodson, RESULTS Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Washington, DC)

Welcome everyone to the June 2015 RESULTS Domestic Anti-poverty virtual meeting! Just a reminder that the Conference Call slides can be found in the Take Action box in the top right hand corner of the RESULTS homepage. We urge you to download them and scroll them yourselves during the call.

We're looking forward to seeing you next weekend in Washington, DC for the RESULTS International Conference.

This is an important call to update you on our tax fairness and economic mobility campaigns just in time for the conference.

## Remarks from Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA-46)

- Represents California's 46<sup>th</sup> District (Los Angeles area).
- First elected in 1996.
- Holds senior positions on House Armed Services and House Homeland Security Committees.
- Member of Congressional Hispanic Caucus and founder and Co-Chair of Women in the Military Caucus, where she advocates for female service members to serve in combat roles and fights to stamp out sexual assault in the armed forces.
- Travels back to her district nearly every weekend to meet with constituents and leaders in the community
- She is a strong advocate for creating jobs, reducing crime, supporting education, and increasing access to quality health care
- Was a student in Head Start
- Got her degree from Chapman University and her MBA from American University

### Recorded remarks from Congresswoman Sanchez:

*Good afternoon, RESULTS volunteers. While I could not join you live today, I want recognize your commitment to advocating on issues that matter most. I understand that you're going to be on the Hill speaking to members of Congress and their staffs about a very important issue – poverty.*

*It is so exciting that your group will be on the Hill because I believe members of Congress need to see your faces and they need to hear your stories. They need to hear about how the Earned Income Tax Credit has affected your lives or those lives of the people that you're advocating for. Or the Child Tax Credit – both of these have made a tremendous difference in the lives of working families. I know in my district, we've had these free seminars where we've had*

*volunteers from the IRS come and help people to do free tax preparation so that we can ensure that people actually work on getting the Earned Income Tax Credit.*

*And so when you're talking to Congress, talk about how things change people's lives. One, use facts and figures and secondly, tell those personal stories. Don't be afraid to tell those personal stories. That can really change the minds of the people in Congress.*

*So once again, talk to them, smile, have a good time, and you're going to be so successful in advocating for those people who don't have a voice usually in the Congress. Thank you and enjoy.*

## **Economic Mobility Campaign Update and July Action**

Susan Fleurant, U.S. Poverty Campaigns Intern (Washington, DC)

- The [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) are key supports for low-income working families. If improvements to the EITC and CTC expire, millions of people will be pushed into deeper financial insecurity.
- The Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to consider tax legislation on our International Conference Lobby Day, July 21, but they may postpone.
- As many of you know, Republicans are pushing to make some business tax breaks permanent
- We need to shift priorities— Congress must focus on saving key provisions of the EITC and CTC as their #1 concern. At a minimum, they must treat businesses and workers the same
- Messaging tips: EITC/CTC promote work; credits create a big bang for the buck and improve self-sufficiency; when making tax changes,

Face-to-face meetings are **the most influential way to influence elected officials!**

Help make a difference by scheduling meetings with members of Congress on Advocacy Day during the [RESULTS International Conference](#) and/or during the August recess (House: 8/3-9/7; Senate 8/10-9/7) Our key priority is to ensure the EITC and CTC improvements are permanently extended.

### **July Action – Set up meetings in July and August to Urge Members of Congress to Protect the EITC and CTC**

([http://www.results.org/take\\_action/july\\_2015\\_u.s.\\_poverty\\_action/](http://www.results.org/take_action/july_2015_u.s._poverty_action/))

1. Coordinate with your group to assign a specific person to request a meeting with each member of Congress.
2. Find contact information for the district office of your member of Congress along with their Schedulers through the [RESULTS website](#) (under "Staff" tab). You can also call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your representative's/senator's office.
3. Call and ask for the scheduler (be ready to leave a short voicemail).
4. Use the following conversation as a template for the conversation with the scheduler. *Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a constituent of Rep./Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_. I am also a volunteer with RESULTS, a grassroots group working to end poverty. I know that Rep./Sen. \_\_\_\_\_*

*values input from constituents on the issues that matter to us. With that in mind, our local RESULTS group would like to schedule a meeting with him/her while we are in Washington for the RESULTS International Conference / while he/she is home for the August recess. There will be at least \_\_\_\_ of us at the meeting, and we would like to discuss how we can create economic mobility through protecting and strengthening tax credits for low-income working families and ways we can work together to support innovative approaches to helping families move out of poverty. May I set that up today? What times would he/she be available to meet?*

5. You may be asked for a written request. Use the above conversation or our [online template](#) to create a request letter/e-mail.
6. If the member of Congress has no time to meet this summer, ask to schedule a meeting the next time he/she is back home. Also ask if he/she is holding any town hall meetings during the August recess.
7. Be sure to note the name of the scheduler and thank that person for their assistance. If you don't get a firm answer when you call, mention when you'll follow up.

Once you confirm a meeting, please contact RESULTS Director of US Poverty Campaigns Meredith Dodson ([dodson@results.org](mailto:dodson@results.org)) for coaching, materials, and tailored requests for your meeting. For additional tips on how to schedule your face-to-face meeting, check out our [Activist Milestone: Meet Face-to-Face with Your Member of Congress](#) and our accompanying [PowerPoint](#).

## July Training – Role Play of a Meeting with a Member of Congress

Joanne Carter, Executive Director of RESULTS (Washington, DC)  
Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Washington, DC)  
Susan Fleurant, U.S. Poverty Campaigns Intern (Washington, DC)

To help you prepare for Advocacy Day at the conference and meetings back home during the August recess, we're going to do a role play of what a face-to-face meeting with a member of Congress might look like – this is a specific example of a meeting with a House Republican Joanne will be the member of Congress and Meredith and Susan will be RESULTS volunteers. When we're done, we'll take a few minutes for everyone to practice with their groups.

**Meredith (Volunteer):** Hi Congresswoman Carter, thank you for talking time to meet with us. May I ask how much time do you have to meet with us?

**Joanne (Rep.):** Hello, it's great to have you here in DC. I have about five minutes to talk with you. Where are you all from?

**Susan (Volunteer):** Hi Congresswoman, I'm Susan and I'm from Centennial.

**Meredith (Volunteer):** Hi Congresswoman Carter, my names is Meredith and I live in Aurora. We'd like to talk with you today about the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

**Joanne (Rep.):** OK, what specifically would you like to discuss about tax credits?

**Susan (Volunteer):** Are you familiar with the EITC and CTC?

**Joanne (Rep.):** Yes, I am aware of them. I'm not a tax expert but understand they go to poor families.

**Susan (Volunteer):** That's right. And they are very successful. [Between 2011 and 2013](#), the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit lifted 148,000 people out of poverty in Colorado, including 82,000 children. Also, studies show that children who live in EITC households grow up healthier, do better in school, and are more productive as adults. And they don't just help families who receive them; they help all of us. In 2012, \$775 million was put back into the Colorado economy as a result of the EITC.

**Meredith (Volunteer):** But the outlook is not all good. Vital improvements to the EITC and CTC are expiring in 2017. This concerns us because millions of families could be pushed into poverty if that happens. As the mother of two young children I know how difficult it can be to afford child care, nutritious meals, and everything else my kids need to succeed. Congress must act this year to save key provisions of these pro-work tax credits that help millions of hard-working families make ends meet.

As you may know, Chairman Paul Ryan of the House Ways and Means Committee has proposed to expand the EITC and the As Ways and Means discusses tax legislation and negotiates a deal with the Senate and President, we need members of Congress like you voicing your support for these tax credits to Representative Ryan. We hope you will tell Chairman Ryan you want the Ways and Means Committee to save these key provisions that help millions of Americans to pay for things that keep them working, such as child care and transportation.

**Joanne (Rep.):** One of my concerns is that these tax credits are rife with fraud.

**Susan (Volunteer):** We agree there needs to be a reduction in EITC errors – but to be clear, these are often unintentional errors, not fraud. As we both know, filing taxes can be complicated, especially in complex family situations like when parents divorce. Studies indicate that often these aren't errors, and 85 percent of children are claimed correctly.

Steps have been taken to reduce the EITC error rate, and more steps should be taken – we hope you will support that effort. I can send you more details about the Treasury Department's recommendations. Nevertheless, it's imperative that the error rate not be used as an excuse to penalize honest hard-working families by failing to maintain the EITC and CTC provisions currently scheduled to expire after 2017.

**Joanne (Rep.):** I will have to look into this more. But why are we talking about this now? These improvements are in place for another two years. We have more pressing things to deal with first.

**Meredith (Volunteer):** Actually, this is best time to deal with this issue. Some in Congress have signaled that they will try later this year to make business tax breaks (including the so-called "tax extenders") permanent, without offsetting the cost. Congress must show they support working families by making the EITC and CTC provisions for modest-income working families permanent as well. This is good policy and hard-working Americans shouldn't have the threat of deeper poverty hanging over them for months or years on end. It's the right thing to do.

So, we are hoping you will speak to Representative Ryan in the next few weeks, voicing your support for saving these key EITC and CTC provisions. Is that something we can count on you to do?

**Joanne (Rep.):** I will take all of this information into consideration, but I want to ask my staff to look into this forward. Thank you for coming to DC to voice your concerns. I know we all share the common goal of making Colorado a better place to live.

**Susan (Volunteer):** Thank you for your time Congresswoman Carter. We will leave this packet with you with more information on this issue. How should we follow up with your staff?

**Joanne (Rep.):** I will make sure you get contact information for my tax aide, Bill. Give him a call next week.

**Meredith (Volunteer):** We appreciate you taking the time to meet with us today. Remember that these tax credits are important to millions of hardworking families in Colorado and around the country. We look forward to working with you to make sure they get the attention they deserve. Before we go, can we get a picture with you?

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**Additional Remarks from Joanne Carter:** We often focus on members who may be more conservative as our main challenge in our lobbying. But I also want to flag that there's a lot more we can and should do to engage members of Congress who already agree with us.

And there's a definitely a risk that we go into the meeting, we talk about EITC or CTC and they say:

*"Don't worry, I support the EITC and the CTC, you don't need to talk with me."*

I think we have to come back and say: *"Thank you so much but we're really worried that these programs could get lost and not be included in a tax deal and we'd be hugely grateful for your active support on this."*

They can certainly cosponsor House and Senate bills and also engage with leadership. Some of them may already be very active so listen to that and thank them and ask *how we can help them*. Meredith and Jos can flag these folks for you.

But we have many allies who could be more active

My point is that we want to encourage Congressional allies to be champions on this and to show those whose support might be soft that this is important to their constituents.

And you can tell your member of Congress who are supporters that other RESULTS folks right now are doing a hundred other meetings and we're absolutely talking to members across the political spectrum, so we hear what they are saying and are working to build broad support.

**Additional Remarks from Meredith Dodson:** this is true for House Democrats, since they serve a key role in sustaining a veto by the president if necessary, and in particular this is true for Senate Democrats. We've seen that many are not willing to "go to the mat" for the EITC and CTC in tax negotiations. We need s show of force so that the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden from Oregon, gets a clear message that EITC and CTC are the top tax priority

Groups practice a lobby meeting on their own.

## Shares

Facilitated by Meredith Dodson

### Regina Hendrickson, RESULTS Salina (Salina, KS)

*Kim Trigg and myself are from the Circles of the Heartland group, in Salina, KS. Our chapter formed in 2012, and we are two of the circle leaders, from the "first class". Our "Getting Ahead Class started on May 29, 2013 and we "graduated" in Sept 2013, we also just completed our 18 month commitment with our "allies".*

*On July 16, 2015; Kim and I will be presenting RESULTS to our circle leaders and allies, and hopefully get them interested in what RESULTS can do for people in poverty. Kim and myself are going to meet on Monday to put packets together for our meeting on Thursday, along with examples of letters, to our senators and congressman regarding EITC, CTC, and SNAP. We are hoping to help some of them write their letters that evening so Kim can take them with her to DC on Friday. We are also going to show them the website and how to navigate through it as well as show the video "Everyday Heroes."*

*Our circle leaders are also involved with our founding board the Guiding Coalition as well as our Big View board. Kim and I are also on some of the committees and are currently working together on a fund raiser for this fall with one of our local "garage bands" which we are tentatively calling "Band against Poverty." In January 2016, we are hoping to be able to help Kansas Wesleyan College with the "Feeding My Starving Children" organization pack nutritional meals for starving children around the world, and are going to need to find 500 volunteers for that effort. We want to try and get as many community members involved in everything "Circles as well as RESULTS" !!!!*

### Kristy Martino, RESULTS U.S. Poverty Organizer and Volunteer with the RESULTS Seacoast group (Kittery Point, ME)

As many of you know, Kristy Martino has been kicking butt in her role as a contractor from her home base on the NH/Maine border, starting new US Poverty groups in New England and the South, mentoring REAL Changers, and taking selfies with Presidential candidates over the past 15 months (we'll hear more about that in a few minutes). Well, I'm thrilled to announce that Kristy formally joined the RESULTS staff on July 1! As a Grassroots Organizer for our US poverty campaigns, she'll continue work to generate numerous new contacts, provide issue and advocacy skills training while representing RESULTS at national conferences, develop partnerships with like-minded organizations, manage our new "Experts on Poverty" project, and continue to start new RESULTS groups. Kristy plays a critical role in expanding our U.S. poverty grassroots network and is such a great colleague – we are lucky to have her officially on board! Now let's hear about her recent and numerous encounters where she talked about poverty with presidential candidates.

*Since I live in the part of Maine that is right over the border from NH, I get a front row seat on the campaign trail. NH takes its politics very seriously, and candidates and potential candidates come through the state so often, I usually have to pick and choose who I go to see – what an*

*exciting luxury – and so far this year, I've already seen, met, and bird-dogged 5 presidential candidates.*

*For those of you who haven't heard the term "bird-dogging" before – I can briefly explain that first. Bird-dogging is essentially a tactic to get policymakers and candidates on record in regards to a specific issue. It's a great technique to use in scenarios like town-halls, chance encounters, or anywhere you may have a very limited time to speak with someone. In addition to getting a response to a targeted question you've asked on record, you also have an opportunity to educate the audience on your issue because these things typically take place in a public setting, and bonus points – the media is never far from the microphone, so you can easily follow up with them as well. In the span of 5 minutes you can reach policymakers, the media, and the general public and shine a light on the issue you care about.*

*The picture you saw of me and Senator Marco Rubio was taken last week. In New Hampshire, the local TV station does a live audience taping with candidates as they come through town. Because I subscribe to all the candidates email lists, follow them on twitter, set up google alerts, and keep up with the local news, I found out you can request a seat at these tapings and submit a question.*

*I submitted a very softball-y question in order to ensure that I would get a question asked on TV and then knew I would have a second opportunity to ask him more directly, one on one. If your question gets picked, you get to sit in the front row, which means you can easily stand up and be first in line for a handshake after taping. Strategy!*

*So my TV question was about how Sen. Rubio would address the lack of opportunity for all due to the growing income and wealth inequality in America – I asked this because I know many of the candidates are just beginning to even say the word inequality, so I wanted to make sure this was raised during taping – and I wanted to hear how he responded. His answer had a lot to do with increasing defense spending and creating more jobs but what I honed in on was how he spoke about anti-poverty programs. Several times he said, "we need to stop trapping people in poverty. These programs don't work, they are trapping people in poverty."*

*Obviously, I disagree with this, so once I saw him start the handshake line after the taping I went right over to him. I thanked him for his support on the Earned Income Tax Credit (always good to start with a thank you) and asked him if I could follow up with his staff to give him some more information on why it's important to prioritize the EITC and the CTC since 16 million would fall into or deeper into poverty if they expire. He said yes, and we talked a bit more about how folks use the EITC – he supports extending it but the nitty gritty implementation is flawed from our perspective, and then I ended by saying, I know you see the value in the EITC and know how successful it is. I want to let you know that other anti-poverty programs like SNAP are also successful and can be a critical lifeline. When my husband and I had to go on SNAP after the recession, we didn't feel like it trapped us in poverty – it lifted us out of poverty.*

*Then of course, I asked for a selfie because that gives you at least another 30 seconds to drive your point home and be thankful and respectful. So, in what was about 3 minutes of interaction time, I was able to raise the issue of inequality, mention the EITC, make a connection to his staffer, and tell a personal story to help combat his resistance to the programs we fight for. And I*

got a cool picture to put on my Facebook-which started even more conversations around these issues.

So, I urge you to do some detective work, find out where candidates will be, do some bird-dogging, snap some pictures, and have FUN with it! This is exciting!!

### Isabelle Soifer, RESULTS Houston (Houston, TX)

Hi everyone, my name is Isabelle Soifer and I am an incoming Real Change Fellow and also a member of RESULTS Houston. As the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator for the Center for Houston's Future, I recently conducted research for their Civic Vitality Community Indicator Report, which included looking at Political Participation, Strong Communities, Social Inclusion, and Philanthropy in the Houston region and how they compare to the country's 10 other major regions. I wanted to share with you one part of my research, the Social Inclusion section, where we discussed economic mobility, wages and income disparities, and income segregation.

The data is not encouraging. In terms of economic mobility, the odds of children rising from the bottom 20 percent of income to the top 20 percent are very slim across the nation, but do vary depending on where children are born. For example, the chance of a child rising from the bottom to top is 8percent in Houston, 11percent in San Francisco, 10percent in New York, and 4percent in Atlanta. In contrast, Houston, Philadelphia, and New York had the highest rate of wealthiest 20 percent of children remaining wealthy. According to the Harvard's Equality of Opportunity Project, the regions with higher economic mobility tend to have less segregation (by income and race), less income inequality, better schools, greater social capital, and more stable families.

Across the nation, income inequality is on the rise. The majority of workers in the U.S. have witnessed their real wages decline since 1979. As a result, the number of middle-income and wealthy households has dropped by 6 and 4 percent, respectively, while the number of lower-income households has grown by ten percent. Unsurprisingly, this has led to an increase in the number of households receiving government assistance; as of 2013, 37percent of households are receiving one or more forms of government assistance.

Finally, residential income segregation proves to be a substantial issue for the country as well. For example, over the past quarter century, Houstonians have increasingly tended to cluster near other people who have similar income levels. Low-income households in majority low-income areas made up 20percent of households in 1980, but grew to 40percent by 2013. Likewise, high-income households living in majority high-income areas grew from 11percent to 24percent over the same period. This kind of segregation can be a barrier to economic mobility for low-income areas.

These and many more findings can be located on the website, [www.thehoustonindicators.org](http://www.thehoustonindicators.org). These findings have a direct relation to the issues and policies we advocate for in RESULTS. I highly recommend everyone visit this page and play around with the numerous interactive graphs which can help with your advocacy work. Please feel free to contact me ([isabellesoifer91@gmail.com](mailto:isabellesoifer91@gmail.com)) if you have any questions about the data. Thank you for letting me share this information with you!

## Announcements

### Tade Mengesha, RESULTS Emerson Hunger Fellow

Tade says farewell and briefly reflects on her time with RESULTS.

Now for this last section of the call, we want to make sure everyone is ready for next week's big event- the RESULTS International Conference. Now, if you're not coming, don't tune out. This is meant for everyone, regardless of whether you come to DC or not. Here goes:

1. First and foremost, most of you have done a **lobby prep call with Meredith** to get ready for your lobby meetings in DC. If you or your group has not had a lobby prep call, please contact Jos Linn ([jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org)) immediately. These calls are very important in helping have a successful meeting with your members of Congress. And we don't just want people going to DC to be on these calls. We invite your entire group. You all have valuable knowledge and experience and something to contribute. And remember, these calls are not just for the conference. When you get meetings scheduled in August, let us know and we'll do a prep call to get ready for them.
2. **Schedule your lobby meetings.** If you have not submitted your requests for lobby meetings, do so now. The longer you wait, the less likely you'll get a face-to-face meeting. We have a [sample request](#) on our website you can use. This is something that those of you not coming to DC can do. Anyone from your group can request a meeting on behalf of those coming to the conference. This will be a big help for those coming to DC. And please, for each meeting you get scheduled, please enter it into the [Conference Lobby Meeting Form](#). This helps us keep track of all the meetings and plan accordingly.
3. **Gather your letters.** Hopefully all of you have gotten letters from people in your community that you plan to have delivered to your members of Congress in DC. If you have them with you today, make sure your DC travelers get them all before you leave. If you have still some to gather, before you leave today figure how you will get them to folks before they leave for DC.
4. **Invite your members of Congress to our Lobby Day reception.** Our Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill on July 21 is a great way for members of Congress to connect with RESULTS and build relationships with your group. Many attend and share a few words that can be inspiring and funny. We want your member of Congress there so please invite them to attend. We have an [invitation letter online](#) you can use. This is also a great project for those of you NOT coming to DC. It helps your travelers focus on their trip and lets you share in the experience. Before you leave today, assign who will make those invitations.
5. **Read the Background Packet.** Our [2015 U.S. Poverty Background Packet](#) has a lot of good information and up-to-date statistics on our current U.S. Poverty Campaigns. It is a resource anyone can use, not just at the conference but throughout the year. For those of you attending the conference, we strongly encourage you *read it before you come to*

*DC and if you want a copy at the conference, please bring a hard or digital copy with you; we will not have copies for everyone in DC.*

6. **Dress Appropriately.** If you're coming to the conference, please remember that this is summer time in Washington, DC. It will likely be hot and humid. While most of your time will be spent comfortably indoors, you will have to go out from time to time, so wear something comfortable. Also, please pack appropriate clothing for Advocacy Day on July 21. You will be meeting with people who are professionally dressed and you'll want to make a good impression. A good rule is to dress as if you were going to a job interview.
7. **Visit the [RESULTS International Conference Resources page](#), including the [Conference Checklist](#).** The checklist has everything you need to get ready for the conference.
8. **Share Advocacy Day with your Local Action Networks.** For those you staying home this year, share about Advocacy Day with your networks. Plan to send an e-mail to your local Action Network talking about your fellow volunteers being in DC and urging them to send an e-mail to Congress about the EITC and CTC in support of their efforts. We'll include a sample message you can use in the July 21 Weekly Update. Also, post messages on Facebook and Twitter about how proud you are of your fellow volunteers for making their voices heard. Spread the word far and wide to remind people that they do have the power to create change.
9. Finally, **prepare to have fun.** Anyone who has been to a RESULTS conference before can tell you that it's more like a family reunion and that policy and advocacy conference (although you get plenty of that too). Expect to have a great time when you get to DC!

A few final Announcements:

- Our next RESULTS Free Agents calls are this Tuesday July 14 at 1:00 pm and 8:00 pm ET. If you live in an area with no active RESULTS U.S. Poverty group, please join us. <http://fuze.me/27491886>; (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID: 27491886
- Also, Our next RESULTS Introductory Call, Friday July 31 at 1:00 pm ET. Invite someone you know to learn about RESULTS on one of these calls – they can register on the [RESULTS website](#).
- You can find these and other events, along with call-in numbers, in the [Events Calendar](#) on the RESULTS website.

Our next U.S. Poverty National Meeting will be in August but we may experiment with a new day and time. We'll keep you posted and let you know the date and time very soon.

For those of you that will be coming to D.C., we are all extremely excited to see you in a week and for those of you staying behind, we are grateful for all the support you've provided to help your fellow advocates attend this year's conference. Thank you all!