**Sample OP-ED: Why Congress Should Act Now to Save Pro-Work Tax Credits**

Newly released U.S. Census data shows that one in seven Americans live at or below the poverty line. That’s almost one in five children living in poverty in one of the richest countries in the world.

**[Numbers like that may be difficult to imagine, but I used to be one of them. There was a time when I struggled to make ends meet despite working multiple jobs. Sometimes I had to choose between feeding my kids and paying the rent…. No one should ever be faced with those choices in America today.]**

**OR:**

[***If the writer does not have firsthand experience, talk about why you care about the issue, perhaps invoking the experience of those you know in the community, or simply remove the personal angle. For example:* People think they know what poverty looks like. But millions of Americans work multiple jobs and still have to choose between feeding their kids and paying the rent. No one should ever be faced with such choices in America today. It is nothing short of a moral outrage that so many are.]**

Poverty is a complex and extraordinarily painful issue, but there are concrete steps we can take to solve it. To start, we should urge Congress to save highly effective yet still temporary provisions of pro-work tax credits that are set to expire in 2017. While bipartisanship is rare in Washington these days, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) have enjoyed support from the likes of President Ronald Reagan, President Bill Clinton, and Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Paul Ryan. Most importantly, according to the recently released 2014 census data, the EITC and CTC helped to lift about **9.8 million** people, including 5.2 million children, out of poverty in 2014 alone**.**

**[INSERT LINE ABOUT HOW TAX CREDITS HELPED YOU IF APPLICABLE OR OTHER PERSONAL CONNECTION TO ISSUE]**

These tax credits are not “handouts.” Only people who work are eligible for the EITC and the low-income portion of the CTC. The credits allow returning veterans, farm workers, janitors, teaching assistants, and **[ENTER YOUR JOB IF APPLICABLE]** like me to keep more of what they earn. In turn, recipients use their refund at local businesses and are able to pay for essentials like food, clothes, and transportation to and from their jobs.

The EITC and CTC have long-term benefits as well: children of recipients are more likely to go to college and earn more as adults.

But if Congress lets key provisions of the EITC and CTC expire at the end of 2017, millions of working families with children will lose part or all of their EITC or CTC, pushing them into — or deeper into — poverty. Right now, Congress is considering tax legislation. Any legislation that extends business tax must permanently extend the EITC and CTC improvements. The consequences of inaction would be high for working families in our state. If Congress fails to save the EITC and CTC improvements in time – a scenario that becomes more likely if action is not taken this year – [[XX] children, and [XX state-ians] overall](http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-fact-sheets-the-earned-income-and-child-tax-credits), will fall into or deeper into poverty and millions more will find it harder to meet their families’ basic needs.

There’s simply no reason why Congress shouldn’t act now to make sure that *all* working families have what they need to make ends meet and eventually get on a path towards greater financial stability. I urge Senators \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Representative(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to put working families in our community first.