

## Build Support for Housing and Tax Policies during the August Recess

The 2019 RESULTS International Conference brought hundreds of advocates from around the country to lobby Congress on ending poverty in the U.S. and around the world. In hundreds of lobby meetings, lawmakers heard about the importance of addressing the affordable housing crisis and tax policies to support low-income workers and children. We now want to build on the momentum from the Conference by meeting with members of Congress during the August recess.

Meeting face-to-face is the [most effective action you can take](#) to influence your members of Congress. Contact your House and Senate schedulers to [make your request for a meeting](#) during the summer recess (and follow up with them if you already have). If you cannot get a meeting, ask about town halls and other public events they may be doing that you can attend.

### Tips for Scheduling a Meeting during the August Recess

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** through the [RESULTS website](#) (if you need help, contact [Jos Linn](#)). 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 phone call 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. Our local RESULTS group would like to schedule a meeting with him/her while he/she is home for the August recess. There will be at least \_\_\_\_ of us at the meeting, and we would to discuss his/her priorities for expanding access to affordable housing, prioritizing tax policies for low-income working families, and other strategies to reduce racial wealth inequality. May I set that up today? What times would he/she be available to meet? (If you are asked for a written request, use the above conversation or our [online template](#) to create a request letter/e-mail).*
5. Also, ask if they are holding any **town hall meetings during the August recess** (also look at [www.townhallproject.com](http://www.townhallproject.com)).
6. **Be sure to note the name of the scheduler and thank that person**. Plan to confirm your meeting with them a few days before it is scheduled to take place.
7. Please contact RESULTS staff (Meredith Dodson [mdodson@results.org](mailto:mdodson@results.org) and Jos Linn, [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org)) for coaching, materials, and tailored requests for your meeting.
8. **Report your lobby meeting** at: [www.tinyurl.com/RMoCReport](http://www.tinyurl.com/RMoCReport).

Building on the conversations during the 2019 RESULTS International Conference, please tailor the text below to speak to members of Congress about affordable housing. In addition, based on conversations many of you had at the Conference, we are focusing on the opportunity to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit this year by elevating that messaging for our August [lobby meetings](#) and [town halls](#). RESULTS staff can help you tweak your message for specific meetings. See our current laser talks, leave behinds, and other materials on our [Lobbying page](#) (in “Current Volunteers”).

### Housing Laser Talk for Members of Congress:

**Engage:** We have an affordable housing crisis. According to Harvard researchers, since 1960 renters’ median earnings have gone up 5 percent while cost of rent went up 61 percent.

**Problem:** We subsidize housing via our tax code by giving tax incentives to wealthier homeowners, while renters are ignored and we make wealth inequality and the racial wealth divide worse. In addition, only one in four of those eligible for housing assistance gets it.

**Illustrate or Inform:** A renters’ tax credit could help address the affordable housing crisis by capping the out-of-pocket rent and utilities expenses a low-income household would pay at around 30 percent of their income. The credit would cover any excess above that up to 100 percent of the community’s “Fair Market Rent.” There have been bipartisan proposals to create a renters’ credit such as H.R. 2169 and S. 1106 (as well as S. 3590, H.R. 7050 and S. 3342 in the last Congress), and researchers at Columbia University estimate that a renters’ credit could lift over 9 million Americans above the poverty line.

**Call to Action:** In addition to supporting efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing, will you support a renters’ credit and voice support for it with House/Senate leaders?

### EITC/CTC Laser Talk for Members of Congress:

**Engage:** Tax policy can create economic opportunity and mobility. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) lift more families and children out of poverty than any other program.

**Problem:** Unfortunately, the current federal tax code taxes more than 5 million low-wage workers not raising children at home into (or deeper into) poverty, and one in three children in low-income families do not receive the full Child Tax Credit.

**Illustrate or Inform:** Over the last several decades, gains in income and wealth have primarily gone to those at the top, while economic growth has slowed and inequality has increased. We should restructure tax policies to reduce inequality and help families make ends meet by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit for low-income families [include your own EITC or CTC experience and/or why you care]. The *Working Families Tax Relief Act* (S. 1138/H.R.3157) is an exciting proposal to expand both the EITC and CTC, helping 114 million people and reducing child poverty by 28 percent.

**House Call to Action:** Will you prioritize working families by cosponsoring the robust EITC and CTC expansions in H.R.3157?

**Senate Call to Action:** Congress is considering legislation to extend a collection of largely business tax breaks. House leaders want expansions of the EITC and CTC in any business “tax extenders” bill. Will you tell Senate leaders to adhere to the 2015 precedent that no business tax breaks should be extended without also helping low-income workers and families through expansions of the EITC and CTC?