030522 - Results.org-Webinar Series

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[Waiting for meeting to begin.]

>>JOANNE: Hello, everyone. It's great to be with you all. I'm Joanne Carter, Executive Director of RESULTS. I want to start today with the horrific loss and community with the death of La'Shon Marshall, her son Caleb, and boyfriend Aaron. She was a leader in experts on poverty cohort, a leader in her community in Detroit and not just a fellow advocate but dear friend. From what people have spoken about, she advocated deeply and passionately. I'm committed to making her proud in the work we continue in her memory, our work to end poverty and the structural oppressions that hold it in place and the future she was devoted to helping her build.

We're grateful to so many who are stepping in to support La'Shon's family in Detroit, Experts on Poverty and our allies. There's have asked about lending support to her loved ones. There are a few ways. Follow the lead of La'Shon's sister and those in Detroit following advice about what's most needed and helpful. RESULTS has made a contribution to the family on behalf of all of us. There's also an online fundraiser to donate if moved. We're helping the family financially and with legal and trauma support through this loss. It's moving to see other allies step up who admired La'Shon and the work she was doing.

Members of RESULTS staff and others will be at the remembrance. We'll be in touch with loved ones and keep you updated if there are new ways to support. Please continue to support each other, processing the grief, anger of this loss and injustice. Reach out to grassroots staff.

You may have seen this but Detroit representative took to the floor of the house in remembrance of La'Shon, calling her an exceptional advocate and beacon of life, remembering where La'Shon spoke about affordable housing. The last portion of today's webinar will be in remembrance but first a conversation on housing and the work ahead. I hope all of us hold tight to each other and knowing we have the chance and profound responsibility to continue this work in her honor and memory.

Now to my colleague, Michael. Thank you very much.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: I'm the senior policy analyst. Following up, I wish I had more time to know La'Shon. For that brief moment that I got to work with her, I knew she was a fierce but loving advocate. I hope our advocacy work moving forward will do justice for a better vision for her life, her son Caleb and her family.

Today's session will focus on our domestic policy on housing and Child Tax Credit. For those new to RESULTS, we've been working on affordable housing assistance. For those with comments, ideas and suggestions hearing our speaker talk about these important issues, share those in the chat. If you have stories, engage in the chat. We'd love to hear from you what you're hearing from the ground. That's helpful information.

I'll provide some updates on the current state of play and congress and what's ahead toward the end. For now, I want to introduce our guest speaker, who will touch on both our CTC work and housing work. I want to introduce Michelle Dallafior.

[Reading from slide.]

I'll have Michelle unmute and have a conversation about ending child poverty.

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: Can you hear me?

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: Tell us more about First Focus and your policy priorities aligning with the CTC and housing.

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: That's a fun, easy one. We work closely on both tax policy and housing. I'm happy to be here and see my colleague Meredith on screen. First Focus on children is a bipartisan advocacy organization to make sure children are at the forefront of tax policy and budget. Our organization covers the broad policy landscape, including housing, early learning and education, physical and mental health, nutrition, juvenile justice, etc. We're a small operation but cover a lot of the landscape and could not be impactful if we did not work with partners such as RESULTS and work everyone on the webinar does.

I want to provide context for why RESULTS and First Focus make good partners. Children are the poorest in our nation and likely to be much poorer than adults. Children of color are the poorest, resulting in an inequality gap that affects every aspect of their life. Child poverty climbed above 16% in 2020, a 10% increase since 2016 and worse without the COVID-19 related aid congress and president provided.

A bit about the budget piece. For years, we've had a downward spending trend on children's programs and services, a record low at 7.6%. With the American rescue plan investments in 2021, we saw the trend flip to 11.2%. That's great. We know a lot of that aid and those investments have expired. We saw with the CTC that its monthly payments kept almost 4 million children out of poverty in 2021, a 30% reduction. What we see now is devastating, a big increase since payments stopped in January.

Housing instability and homelessness create adverse economic effects on children. Issues are often discussed in economic and policy silos, where our partnership can make a difference. Child and youth homelessness in the United States is too common. An estimated 1 in 41 school-aged children are homeless. Those under 6 experience a rate of 1 in 18 living in homeless situations. As of 2018, 1 in 10 of all high school students experience homelessness. At least 2/3 were not identified as experiencing homelessness. We don't have a good count.

There's a lot of study around child poverty, including the 2019 Child Poverty Report, confirming that cash transfers improve long-term health, education outcomes, etc. A monthly allowance such as in the improved CTC is most effective at reducing child poverty. Cash provides parents the ability to provide food, etc. and reduce mental stress. There's data that 91% of monthly payments were spent on basic needs, 59% on food, 45% on rent/mortgage, 44% clothing, 40% on educational supplies and other things that matter for kids and families.

I'll go quickly. In terms of our work together, we have already been working closely on improvements to The CTC and EITC, which had an important provision for kids, lowering eligibility to age 18 for youth experiencing homelessness and former foster youth. We'll see the benefits as they file taxes.

We also have worked and need to do more on a renter's tax credit, a similar monthly support to help with the amount of rent paid in excess of a certain percent of a house's income. The bipartisan stability and family voucher acts creates vouchers for children under 5 and women who are pregnant and facing homelessness our housing instability. The child poverty reduction act would allow reducing child poverty 50% within a decade. Turning it to you to keep discussion going.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: It's helpful to talk about these bills and legislations. RESULTS has been working on extending the CTC and affordable housing, more rental assistance for families through the budget reconciliation process. For those following the past year, Build Back Better is not done yet and may not be at all. Are there important advocacy lessons or challenges learned?

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: Yes and yes. One challenge is a big one overall. I would pivot to the solution of partnering with other advocacy organizations and voices from home making a difference. So much energy was spent on Build Back Better or whatever we may end up calling it; I hope we pass it soon. Some other things slipped. I mentioned the renter's tax credit. It was not part of Build Back Better. There's focus on other important things pending in the legislation and on a time out.

I'd say I feel badly about that but point to that I feel the advocacy community did a great job organizing. A large coalition came around the COVID-19 needs and working together. Meredith and I have been on many calls with Hill staff on tax provisions and components of Build Back Better. That's a good outcome. There are so many hours in the day. We rely on each other as partners in advocacy. Really feeling like how do you sort of keep your eye on the different pieces that are needed moving forward. That's why organizations like yours are so important to keep moving in that direction.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: Thanks. I'll put a link in the chat to share an article from NPR that talks about the lack of political appetite to invest long-term on fighting child poverty. We've seen this at play for decades. You've worked on the Hill for many years. Do you have tips and strategies to offer grassroots advocates and volunteers, particularly those not supportive of our priorities?

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: It's a different time. I started at a young age. The stories we're hearing from back home make a difference. I know they did for me and my bosses when I was on the Hill. It drives home the need for action and grows that political will. I could go to Ted and say XYZ needs to be done. Here's what I'm hearing from people in county ABC. Then it would stick with him. He could understand and take that to the floor and talk to other members. I think that's important. I also think members talking to members - and we've been asking colleagues on the Hill if bosses would talk to members not fully on board with things we prioritize - I was fortunate to work with members willing to have those conversations.

We need stories from back home and knowing how the CTC is being used and that children have households that can't access housing vouchers. With HUD, children couch hopping, for example, aren't accessing the benefits. I hope that's helpful. I'd appreciate your reaction.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: You brought up great points and something we can do a deep dive in in another webinar. The impact of poverty for children and youth experiencing homelessness and overlap of how they can benefit from the CTC and EITC - it's hard to divorce them. They go hand in hand. We need both. That's what we should take from the webinar today. Families need monthly payments and rental assistance, making sure they thrive. Currently, they're feeling the pinch with the rise in grocery and rent prices, fuel. I was just in California, where gas is $6/gal. It's shocking. This contributes to further housing instability.

I'm happy to answer questions in the chat. We have a few minutes. I'm going to read one that came in from our volunteers. How does despite in child poverty after the monthly CTC payments ended compare to when they started? Some dropped 30% in 2021 but spiked 40% in 2022.

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: It was about a 30% drop. In January, it increased I think nearly 4 million more children in poverty from 12 to about 17%. You're asking me to do that quick math. I think it's still over 40%. I do like math.

We've also been pushing. Build Back Better - or going back to the American Families Plan - is a kids' bill. There's housing and tax credits, permanent extension of the children's health insurance program, paid school meals, paid family leave, etc. are there to put an emphasis. It takes a lot of policy levels to address child poverty. The CTC is a critical one and very impactful, as we've seen. It's a number of policy provisions that we need to pursue.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: You talked about cash assistance and investment on our children. There's a question in the chat. We have room for one more question. Then we can answer questions via chat. Something to do about the work with members of congress in posting work requirements for some benefits, CTC or housing assistance. How do we convince congress that work requirements aren't a good idea?

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: Voices from home. I can't underscore that enough. There's a body of studies that say the tax credits don't have an impact on work. If they do, is it so bad that a parent spends a couple more hours with their children a week than work because they've got a steady, reliable monthly benefit coming? I think we just have to keep making the case that it doesn't have an impact. We have studies that show that. Couple that with the stories, the real life stories.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: Thanks, Michelle. I want to pivot a bit. If you can take additional questions in the chat and stay a few minutes to answer those, that would be great. Thank you so much for joining us today.

>>MICHELLE DALLAFIOR, FIRST FOCUS: Yeah, thank you.

>>MICHAEL SANTOS: Yes, thank you.

Pivoting to the current state of play on what's happening on The Hill. Build Back Better is being used as advancing our priorities and hit a snag last year. It's uncertain if it will happen and include extending the CTC and rental assistance via housing vouchers. President Biden at his last State of the Union called out the need for more affordable housing and to extend the CTC. Next week, the Senate democrats are meeting to regroup to reignite President Biden's domestic policy agenda.

There's a lot we still need to know, whether the bill will move forward and the scope of the bill. There's a reconciliation deal being discussed behind the scenes. There's no guarantee that these negotiations will make it into the bill. It's important to keep your issues in front of lawmakers.

In terms of need for affordable housing, I want to share this from the New York Times. There's also data on eviction rates across the country. This shows how fast rents have gone up in the last year. On the left, you can see the big cities where rents are high. On the right, you see places where there's been the greatest change in the rent. This is where you see a lot of hikes happening for close to 30% of rent.

For those living in poverty and having trouble trying to make ends meet, any increase can take a dent out of your budget. It's important to keep the drumbeat for congress to pass a recovery bill that advances extending the CTC and making affordable housing.

[See chat.]

Use media to push for investments . . . [Reading from slide.]

Here are resources to check out. We have uploaded Laser Talks, our March Action sheet online. You can reach out to me or Meredith. I'll leave contact information in the chat. I'll also try to answer questions in the chat.

Before I turn it over to the next speaker, I want to take a moment to welcome a new staff member. I want to give a warm welcome to Blake Turpin. They joined us last month and will be with us until July. They'll be helping us work on our campaign strategy in the next months. You may see them in webinars. They may lead webinars.

[Reading from slide.]

With that, I'm going to hand it over to Joanne for our Global Policy.

>>JOANNE: Welcome, Blake, and thanks guests. I want to start with remembrance of Dr. Paul Farmer. So many people in the community and world were inspired by Paul's commitment to justice and equity. He worked with partners around the world. He delivered HIV and TB treatment around the world, as well as with work in Ebola. Policymakers didn't think it was possible or a priority to scale up lifesaving HIV and AIDS treatment. Haiti had already done it. Paul worked with officials and others in Haiti to learn first-hand about that work. They made it clear that there was no excuse not to do that everywhere.

That experience was transformational for policymakers that went and for the political mobilization to follow and the millions of people now accessing lifesaving AIDS treatment globally. I was lucky to have Paul as a friend and ally. After he joined our international conference, he sent an email with a line that said "so proud to work for RESULTS." I know he'd be proud of the work you've done and that you will do.

He was passionate about the Global Fund because of the impact it made for quality healthcare for everyone. Most know this September that the Biden administration will bring leaders together for the Global Fund conference, which just laid out a plan to save 20 million lives. That's only possible if the United States and other world leaders step up with funding.

I'm pleased and honored. I'm checking. Can you let me know if Linda has joined? I'm pleased and honored to welcome longtime fighter of HIV and AIDS.

[Reading from slide.]

She's dedicated her career and life to fighting for lifesaving treatment and against HIV and AIDS stigma. She was director of the World AIDS campaign and did work in South Africa at a time when national leaders were denying the epidemic and global leaders ignored it. She's led work regionally, nationally and globally. We look forward to learning more. Our colleague Rosemary Emburu gave us a look inside. We look forward to hearing about the wonderful African leadership from the last few months. Over to you.

>>LINDA MAFU: Thank you so much for the opportunity to be on this platform. The director of RESULTS, family, grassroots advocates, friends and colleagues, Thank you so much for this opportunity. I am a South African. 20 years ago, my family, friends and colleagues were dying. It was preventable death. They were dying because they could not afford to pay for their own treatment and the healthcare services that they needed. It was preventable death. Because they couldn't afford to pay for their own lives, they died.

Fast forward to today. Yesterday, I was leading a platform, where we were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Global Fund partnership and the impact of the Global Fund partnership. That meant we were celebrating saving 44 million lives. I'm one of them. I'm proud to be now part of this Global Fund family and to be talking about the Global Fund and the impact.

20 years ago, we needed an equalizer and a funding mechanism that would transform the world and level the field for even the communities that are living in poverty. One of the key things the Global Fund did to our communities was give hope that things can change and to make sure that the communities themselves were at the center of their response and finding solutions within their own lives and in the HIV, TB and malaria context.

Now we're faced with COVID-19, the new pandemic, that is having devastating impacts on the HIV, TB and malaria programs, taking us back 2 decades. Therefore, we need to fight back and stronger. What does that mean in terms of work the Global Fund is doing and your support? You are the community that called for an equalizer. You advocated and ensured that there was political will for us to get treatment in our communities and for the United States and many other donor countries to contribute, come together and collaborate to make sure there's this global village and movement thinking about everyone else in the world.

Therefore, for me just thinking about the Global Fund and the work you've done, I celebrate every day. However, the reality of the COVID-19 is reminding us again about these inequalities and the importance of global solidarity. We cannot afford to see and go back when it comes to HIV, TB, and malaria. The progress made needs to be sustained and scaled up. How do we do this? I'm smiling. My video is not working, but you'd see I'm smiling.

The reason is because this is an opportunity to mobilize resources that would then help us get back on track because COVID-19 had a devastating impact. We need resources. Also, to scale up and reach the goals that we put in front of ourselves when it comes to the 2030 goals.

How are we going to do that? As the Global Fund and partners came together and looked at one of the global needs, we had WHO, Rolled Back Malaria, UNA, etc. help us to look at the global need. Out of that, what's the contribution of the Global Fund? Then we developed an investment case launched on February 23 and 24, a pathway that says these are resources we need and what we'll do with those resources. This is how big the problem is and the kind of investments that we are going to focus on.

With that investment case, there are a couple takeaways. One, at least $18 billion USD is needed to get back on track. In that way, we will be able to save 20 million lives. It's very ambitious a target but doable with your advocacy, our partnership, the technical support that we're getting, the leadership of the implementing countries. We'll be able to attain those results.

We also look at the point where we are looking at the mortality rate. That means a reduction of debts. That's one of the biggest things that we talk about, a huge challenge being unnecessary debt. Replenishment gives another opportunity to mobilize resources and reduce debts. We had a good opportunity in terms of investment case launch at the proprietary meeting with leadership of 5 cohosting countries - Kenya, Rwanda, DRC, South Africa and Uganda. That's a huge, important point to think about. It's a leadership of the south and commitment to say we're part of the solution and also looking at how we mobilize these resources. How do we increase our own domestic resource allocation to health?

It's a very important indication.

We're very grateful to the 5 heads of state that have really engaged with the launch of the investment case. We're also grateful to the leadership of the United States and President Biden for offering to support us and host the replenishment conference. The leadership of the United States is very important for us. It's a rallying point for many other donors. Leadership is there for making sure that we have global solidarity and other donors come to the table. We thank the United States and you advocates. Without your support, advocacy and voices, we would not be able to be saying that we're celebrating this now.

Thank you. Thank you so much. Please keep supporting us. Thank you for believing in the Global Fund as a strong financial mechanism.

In terms of the investment case, it's our advocacy tool enabling us in many ways to look at one investing in HIV, TB and malaria but also in healthcare systems. We talked about how COVID-19 had a huge impact on HIV, TB and malaria. The situation could have been worse if resources weren't invested in systems for health. Because those resources also invested in systems for health, many countries were able to respond to the new pandemic.

However in this new mobilization of at least $18B, one of the key areas is ensuring investing in health systems so those a country has can respond to existing epidemics of HIV, TB, malaria, and other things and new pandemics. We've learned lessons from COVID-19. If you're asked what that $18B USD would buy for you, the first thing that is very important is that it will save 20 million lives. That's huge.

Second, it will reduce the mortality rate by 54%. Third, it will avert 250M new infections for HIV, TB and malaria. Those are key advocacy tools and numbers for human beings. It's important that we have an understanding of that.

COVID-19 had devastating impact on HIV, TB and malaria, and we know one of the key things part of what we want to achieve is to ensure that we invest in healthcare systems. That's very important. Healthcare systems include a lot of things. It's about supply chain, strengthening disease surveillance, ensuring community healthcare workers able to check, trace and support, ensuring that we have responsive accessible healthcare facilities within walking distance for people. That's very important for us.

It's about strengthening the countries to be able to respond to the pandemic and contribute to the pandemic preparedness. We need your support to mobilize the $18B USD. That's the bottom line in terms of resources needed. We need your support. We need your voices. You have access to decisionmakers. We need you to tell the story. We'll be able to support you and provide information and facts if you need voices from the Global South. We'll work with you closely to do that.

You have access to decisionmakers at the Capitol. We need you to remind them of this important agenda. We need to you remind them that every life counts. Therefore, we need to invest in what counts and now. We need your global support and call of action. We need your support in many ways.

The key areas that we are working on at the moment - and there are some where we've really done well - are in launching the investment case. We now need to take that out globally and ensure that people understand the investment case and what it means. Also understand the cost of inaction. If we don't mobilize resources, what will happen? The reality is we want to meet the targets set for 2030. We won't say universal health coverage can be enjoyed by people, that 20 million lives have been saved, etc. The cost of inaction is devastating.

We need to remind all decisionmakers that this is very important. There are competing priorities. However, we need to fight now and make sure that we have saved people's lives. We're in the business of saving people's lives. One of the key things for us because it's a journey to the replenishment conference is we're looking for platforms for key mobilizing moments that we can work with you on. We have launched the investment case. We're looking at donor countries to look at key mobilizing moments. We're looking at what you need as advocacy tools. What are the key areas you want to focus on?

The investment case talks about young women and girls, sexual health and rights, gender and human rights. What are the key angles you want to use so we can work with you on that? It talks about domestic resource allocation and the kind of investments for HIV, TB and malaria. There are many opportunities to work together.

We need your support to remind donors to increase contributions. We won't reach 18 billion USD without significant increases from donors, including the United States. We're talking to and working closely with the implementing countries for them to increase their domestic resource allocation to health. It's going to be a huge increase, 59% increase. That's quite steep and within the context of COVID-19. We'll work closely to look at the fiscal space and look at how they mobilize the resources.

Those are key things and key messages coming from us. Also, whatever you need for us to support you so you develop a convincing argument in terms of why we need this 18 billion, you see it's a 29% increase from the last replenishment of 14 billion. We really want to find those resources and increase our allocation to the different diseases so the countries are able to respond better and stronger to the HIV, TB and malaria, as well as being prepared for other pandemics.

I'm going to stop here. Thank you very much. If there are questions, feel free. Thank you so much.

>>JOANNE: That was amazing. We couldn't see your face, but your energy came through the audio. Thanks for laying out so clearly the case for Global Fund's impact on health systems, as well as saving lives now and the investment case.

Do you have thoughts about approaching a member of congress who would see themselves as fiscally conservative about a 29% increase in the Global Fund? I know we have good bipartisan support. What about the reductions of infections and deaths? Is that a comparison over the next 3 years? Those are 2 questions in the chat.

>>LINDA MAFU: Thank you so much. In terms of reduction, it's over 3 years. That would be the correct answer. In terms of increasing and why we would increase, we need to highlight that COVID-19 has impacted the progress made. We need to get back on track. The increase will increase the number of lives saved, decrease new infections and decrease mortality rates. Those are the key things why we're seeking to have more resources.

The additional piece is around wanting to ensure that we have stronger systems for health, increasing our investment so there are stronger systems for health able to respond to any new pandemic. COVID-19 won't be the last. We'll be facing more. We need systems for health able to respond to any new pandemic. Thanks.

>>JOANNE: Exactly. Really powerful and clear. One last, important question in the investment case was from Jim Driggers. What portion of the Global Fund's resources support the health systems part of this work? It's not earmarked but supporting the health systems. Can you share that?

>>LINDA MAFU: Thank you. The portion looking at the systems for health is about $6B USD going to strengthening the systems for health. One lesson learned from COVID-19 is there was a lot of reprogramming for things going to HIV, TB and malaria programs that went to COVID-19 programs. We don't want that when there's another pandemic. We need a system able to respond to all the different things without taking from another one. Therefore, we're looking at possibly $6B USD.

>>JOANNE: Thank you so much for being with us. We really look forward to working very closely with you in all the days between now and replenishment, working to make sure $18B is the minimum and that we have the biggest replenishment in the history of the Global Fund. Thank you.

>>LINDA MAFU: Thank you so much. Thank you for having me.

>>JOANNE: Thanks. Now to John Fawcett to give key updates related to this.

>>JOHN FAWCETT: Thanks. Hi, everyone. Great to hear from Linda. As she and Joanne talked about on World AIDS Day talked about replenishment. Last month, it kicked off with the investment case. There are two issues. They have to urge other donors to increase donations, that means meetings at the J7 and J20, etc. Hitting that $18B as a minimum should be a top priority of the United States among the other things being done right now. Diplomacy is important.

Second, lead by example. We have to increase our contributions as the United States if we expect our countries, including recipient countries, to do the same by stepping up with leadership and contributions. It's the largest replenishment ever at $18B over 3 years.

Last month, we worked with Barbara Levy, chairing the subcommittee of foreign assistance, and Michael McCall of the foreign affairs committee to lead a letter that used your diplomatic might to make the replenishment successful. You asked representatives to sign on to the letter.

137 signers asked the president to make this a priority. I love seeing these signatures. We listed signed letters during the pandemic era. This is beautiful. This is like my Sistine Chapel. There are 121 republican signers and a broad range of conservative to the most liberal MoCs. Fantastic job.

We've got a couple followup actions available. Spread the word and thank a Member of Congress. If they didn't take the action, think of it as the first of many opportunities to engage a member on the Global Fund and stepping up to fight against HIV, TB and malaria and health systems.

Last, I want to plug you into a couple resources to check out. There are many more. One is the investment case, the document that lays out the case for $18B, what it would buy. There's a summary and full version, both helpful.

From partners at Friends of the Global Fight, the United States version, it's oriented toward United States policymakers. Peter Sanz, head of Global Fund, will be here next year. We appreciate everyone's work on this letter with more to come.

This concludes the global policy section. In a moment, we'll begin the final portion to celebrate the lives of La'Shon, Caleb, and Aaron. Take a pause and breath to be fully present with this remembrance. Thank you.

>>KEISHA PERKINS: Think about why you're here. Think about the people most directly impacted by issues we work on, going back to the sacrifices made to survive, courage and vulnerability shown every time they share lived expertise.

When I take time to remind myself why I do this work, I think about a few things. I think about my entire childhood and family that struggled with homelessness and spent years sleeping on floors or cots for months on end. I think about our experts on policy that know better than anyone what it takes to end poverty because they've lived through it.

Especially in the past 2 weeks, I thought about La'Shon, a RESULTS advocate, fellow expert on poverty, friend, mother and more to many of us, a person who showed up for everyone and everyone. I met La'Shon in May last year when I started the Experts on Poverty program and joined RESULTS. We connected immediately. La'Shon was one of the most beautiful people I've met. I learned so much about her and from her in the time we spent together.

La'Shon faced so much trauma in her life and constantly deal with people degrading and disrespecting her for being a Black woman, not professional enough to fit into the DC policy world and being forced into poverty. Poverty is preventable with effective, transformative policy change. La'Shon's pain and suffering was preventable. She deserved better than she got.

What amazed me most about La'Shon is no matter what she faced or how much she was struggling, she always had a smile on her face, taking her pain and experiences and using them to shed light on the realities of a single Black mother living in poverty. She was a powerful advocate not afraid to share her soul and be vulnerable in front of any audience, legislators, RESULTS advocates or the public. She gave so much of herself to RESULTS and the antipoverty field. She knew better than any that showing up and speaking up for antipoverty policies, especially as someone with lived expertise, was the only way to make the world a better place.

I'm honored that I got the privilege to know her on a personal and professional level. She made a massive impact in mine and many other lives. I hope this immense loss lights a fire in all of us to keep fighting and harder. Don't compromise on policies needed to end poverty. That's what La'Shon would want from us.

You don't just need to take my word on it. You can listen to La'Shon's words in this video that we created commemorating La'Shon. I'll turn it over so we can watch that video.

[Full captioned video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37iSkfeeLas&t=28s.]

Thank you to our creative manager, Debra, for putting together that incredible video that highlights who she was and what she cared about. Now from Yvonne from her local group in Detroit and who brought La'Shon into RESULTS.

>>YVONNE WYBORNY: Can you hear me? OK. To be honest, who introduced us to La'Shon was Marquis. He was a person that worked at Covenant House. He was passionate about people experiencing poverty advocating on their own behalf to change things in the United States. Anyway, Marquis introduced La'Shon to me and our Detroit RESULTS group. I think the first memory - someone already shared this - but every time I met her, she'd greet me with "hello, beautiful." She always made me feel special, but La'Shon was a beautiful person.

She was a mother to Caleb and passionate advocate for RESULTS. I think the first time I remember her - La'Shon went to many meetings with Members of Congress. We were in a meeting with Senator Saganaw's office. I remember her cheering up and sharing her story with many members of Congress, including Talib and Lawrence. She was a passionate advocate for housing choice vouchers.

She'd always say "I'm blessed to have one." She was also advocating for allowing more flexibility for housing vouchers. She wanted to move to a safer neighborhood and community with better schools. I remember how joyful she was at the national RESULTS conference in DC. She was so joyful to see her RESULTS family. She was a passionate advocate and knew how important our work was. Crickett said she was a great hugger, too.

I guess another thing was she was hopeful and optimistic for her and her son Caleb. Even with all the obstacles that she had in her past, she was still hopeful of her future and her son Caleb's future. She was so excited that Caleb was starting school because there was such possibility for his future.

That's another reason why she was passionate for RESULTS. She was a mother to Caleb and passionate advocate for RESULTS. It was all about Caleb and his future. I just want to say that I had the joy and pleasure of spending time with La'Shon and Caleb, going grocery shopping and running errands. Caleb let me grab him and spin him around. It was about a hopeful future for both of them. I just wanted to share that. Caleb was an important part of her life, too. Thank you very much.

>>KARYNE BURY: Thank you so much, Yvonne, Keisha and others who shared their thoughts on her life and advocacy work. La'Shon was a true friend and inspiration. She'll sorely be missed. The work we do to continue to create the world that she and Caleb deserved continues. To share tributes and support La'Shon's family, we have a page of resources. You can go to results.org/lashon. With that, I'll pass it to Clara Moore, who will lead us in a poem.

>>CLARA MOORE: Thank you so much and to Yvonne and Keisha for really trying to capture La'Shon. It was a humbling experience to write this. La’Shon is impossible to capture in a few paragraphs. I feel honored to try. Her life was real and complicated and nuanced and textured and full of love. She had Unimaginable strength and genuine openness. The connections she made spanned across time and space. She was a dedicated and passionate mother and a phenomenal advocate. She had this amazing way of making you feel so special, like really special, like you were the most important person in the world special. She always had an smile and never missed a chance for a joke. She was always there with a "Hey Beautiful" just when you needed it.

La’Shon was so proud of her son Caleb, so proud of herself as a mom. It is difficult to encapsulate a life so bold and a mind so vibrant and laugh so infectious and a heart so, so big, but I wrote this piece of poetry to try to do that:

Dear La'shon:

When I think of La’Shon I see a lake - crystal clear water, stretching to the horizon, sparkling and glittering in the sun, gently rolling swells that calm fingertips and toes, playful waves bubbling a perpetual conversation with the shore until a strong wind comes and the waves turn into roaring laughter and sprays of simmering drops fall on to unsuspecting stones. But eventually the wind calms and the waves recede and the rocks, smoothed from years of persistently murmuring waves, are left there to dry and become dull in the afternoon heat. The water from this lake fills aquifers and wells for miles around. In the words of Otis Redding, you don’t miss your water until your well runs dry.

And sweet La’Shon. We are so thirsty. Thank you for this opportunity to honor La'Shon and Caleb.

>>KEN PATTERSON: Let's take a moment of silence for La'Shon, her son and boyfriend.

[Moment of silence.]

Thanks for that. It's really hard to lose someone like La'Shon, who is so courageous, bold and aligned with our values. It's hard to lose La'Shon to the same failed policies that we're trying to correct, safe, fair housing and ensuring that everyone has what they need to become healthy, productive results and to have fun.

One of the most important things we can do is fight on for what people deserve. I think La'Shon would have wanted that. Thank you for joining us. I hope you have a good rest of the weekend. Let's keep fighting on for La'Shon.

[End of meeting.] [219 PM ET.]