

February/March 2024, Action Sheet, U.S. Poverty

Expand the Child Tax Credit now

Almost three years ago, Congress expanded the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to all families with low income and sent it to them as a monthly payment. As a result, child poverty dropped by 40 percent. Sadly, Congress let that expansion expire at the end of 2021. Since then, child poverty has dramatically increased.

RESULTS volunteers have been advocating for Congress to expand the CTC since the 2021 expansion expired. After thousands of calls, letters, and meeting, Congress has responded. In January 2024, the House passed the *Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act* by a vote of 357-70. Along with tax breaks for business, the bill includes significant improvements to the Child Tax Credit, namely:

- It expands the refundable portion of the credit to \$1,800 in tax year 2023, \$1,900 in tax year 2024, and the full \$2,000 in tax year 2025 and indexes it to inflation.
- It allows families with low income to receive the same credit for all of their children. Under current law, only wealthier families receive the CTC on this “per child” basis.
- It allows families to calculate their CTC using the higher of their current year’s earnings or their previous year’s earnings. This “look-back” provision will maximize the credit for them.

[Estimates from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) show that 16 million children who currently don’t receive the full CTC will benefit and give 500,000 children in families with low incomes the tools to lift themselves from poverty.

This deal is clearly a compromise. Compared to the 2021 CTC expansion, this falls well short. It leaves too many children in poverty, which is why we must continue to advocate for covering all low-income children. But in a contentious, divided Congress, this agreement is progress. It also puts us in a stronger position to seek a full expansion when Congress debates major tax issues in 2025.

With the House passage, we must now convince the Senate to do the same. But there are senators who want changes. The object to the look-back provision, which they claim will entice people to not work. This defies both data and logic. [The Tax Foundation has already looked at the provision](#) and concluded that it will have no impact on employment.

Furthermore, to assume that a parent earning even the federal minimum wage (\$15,080/year) would forego that income for an \$1,800 per child tax credit is ludicrous.

The Senate must pass this bill now.

Tell your senators to pass the Child Tax Credit expansion

Write a letter to both senators today urging them to quickly pass the *Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act*. Time is of the essence. Use the talking points below as a guide.

1. Dear Senator _____,
2. My name is _____. I am a constituent of yours from _____ and a RESULTS volunteer.
3. I am writing to urge you to support the *Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act*, which expands the Child Tax Credit.
4. Since 2021, child poverty has dramatically increased because millions of families lost access to the full CTC. This bill would help by allowing millions of families with low incomes to receive a larger credit than what they get now.
5. Estimates are 16 million children in families with low-income will benefit and give the families of 500,000 children the tools to escape poverty. [*Perhaps share how an expanded CTC would help your family*].
6. In addition, studies show the expansion will not increase unemployment, does not add to the deficit, and does not change CTC eligibility for immigrant families.
7. While this agreement falls short of covering all children experiencing poverty, it is a step in the right direction. It is imperative the Senate pass this legislation quickly so families can claim the new CTC on their 2023 taxes.
8. Will you support the *Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act* and vote against any harmful amendments to the CTC provisions? Also, will you urge Senate leadership to bring it to a vote as soon as possible?
9. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Tips for your letters

- For questions, contact RESULTS staff at grassroots@results.org.
- Write a letter to each of your senators (<https://results.org/volunteers/legislator-lookup>).
- You can hand-write or type your letters.
- Plan to deliver letters in upcoming lobby meetings or e-mail them to the tax aides in each office. Contact RESULTS staff for assistance.
- When you get a response, please let RESULTS staff know what they said.