

The logo for RESULTS, featuring the word "results" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font, positioned inside a white speech bubble shape with a tail pointing towards the bottom-left corner. The background of the entire slide is a solid, vibrant red.

results

RESULTS Print Media: U.S. Poverty

January 1 – April 19, 2024

Date	State	Article	Outlet	Media Type	Topic
<u>Go to Alaska media</u>					
3/21/24	AK	Child care assistance	Anchorage Daily News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Arizona media</u>					
2/7/24	AZ	Benefits of the CTC	Lake Havasu News-Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/3/24	AZ	Senators urged to support act for American families	Arizona Daily Sun	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/3/24	AZ	Urge Senate to Expand the Child Tax Credit	Arizona Daily Star	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to California media</u>					
2/1/24	CA	Lawmakers Must Fully Fund the WIC Program	LA Progressive	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/19/24	CA	Having A Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe	City Watch	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
3/15/23	CA	Lee's legacy marked by love and kindness	East Bay Times	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, Global Fund for AIDS, TB, Malaria
3/15/23	CA	Lee's legacy marked by love and kindness	Mercury News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, Global Fund for AIDS, TB, Malaria
4/11/24	CA	Rents Are Too High Nationwide: A Renters' Tax Credit Would Help	LA Progressive	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Colorado media</u>					

4/10/24	CO	Children and poverty don't belong in the same sentence	Daily Camera	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Florida media</u>					
1/9/24	FL	Congress must expand Child Tax Credit	Orlando Sentinel	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
1/21/24	FL	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Bring It Back.	FlaglerLive	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/30/24	FL	The child tax credit changed my life: lawmakers have a chance to bring it back	South Florida Sun Sentinel	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/31/24	FL	Elected officials must take a bold approach on addressing affordable housing issues	Tallahassee Democrat	Letter to the editor	Housing
4/4/24	FL	Time for Renters' Tax Credit	FlaglerLive	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Hawai'i media</u>					
2/15/23	HI	Let's put an end to 'shameful situation'	Hawaii Tribune-Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Illinois media</u>					
1/26/24	IL	How child tax credit changes lives	Jacksonville Journal-Courier	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
2/19/24	IL	Lawmakers must fully fund WIC program	Jacksonville Journal-Courier	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
<u>Go to Iowa media</u>					
2/2/24	IL	Lawmakers must fully fund the WIC program	Times-Republican	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC

Go to Maine media

2/24/24	ME	Bill helps children living in poverty	Portland Press-Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
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Go to Massachusetts media

2/12/24	MA	Lawmakers must fully fund the WIC program	Daily Item	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/17/24	MA	We must prevent a decrease of WIC funding due to congressional inaction	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor	WIC, Child Tax Credit
2/19/24	MA	Having A Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe	The Queen Zone	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
3/25/24	MA	Child Tax Credit	The Boston Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
4/13/24	MA	Renters need tax credit to ease sky-high costs	Boston Herald	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit

Go to Missouri media

1/4/24	MO	The importance of home	Columbia Missourian	Op-ed	Housing
1/8/23	MO	Support childhood tax credits for low-income families	Joplin Globe	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
1/22/24	MO	Expand Child Tax Credit For Low-Income Families	Webster-Kirkwood Times	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/2/23	MO	Much-needed expansion of the Child Tax Credit	Daily American Republic	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/26/23	MO	No title	Branson Tri Lakes News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit

Go to Nevada media

2/20/24	NV	Having a child shouldn't cause financial catastrophe	Nevada Current	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
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Go to New Mexico media

2/5/24	NM	We urgently need national action on the Child Tax Credit	Albuquerque Journal	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
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Go to New York media

3/26/24	NY	How long must families wait for child tax credit?	Finger Lakes Times	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
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Go to North Carolina media

1/7/24	NC	Child Tax Credit	The News & Observer	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
2/1/24	NC	Lawmakers must fully fund WIC program	The Butner-Creedmoor News	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/16/23	NC	Having a child shouldn't cause financial catastrophe	The Butner-Creedmoor News	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
2/22/24	NC	Child care should not cause financial hardship	Reflector	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
3/31/24	NC	High Food prices	Charlotte Observer	Letter to the editor	SNAP
4/10/24	NC	Budd, Tillis should move on Child Tax Credit	The Sylva Herald and Ruralite	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit

Go to North Dakota media

1/8/24	ND	Rep. Armstrong voted for extension of CTC; hoping Sens. Hoeven and Cramer will do the same	Grand Forks Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/30/24	ND	Senate must pass the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act	Grand Forks Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Ohio media</u>					
1/8/24	OH	Expanding the child tax credit to help needy families is the just and fair thing to do	Cleveland Plain Dealer	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Oklahoma media</u>					
3/8/24	OK	Expand tax credits that directly help working-class families	Tulsa World	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
4-16/23	OK	Wage war against hunger, poverty	The Oklahoman	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, U.S. hunger
<u>Go to Oregon media</u>					
1/2/24	OR	What a great way to start the New Year	Corvallis Gazette-Times	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, Renter Tax Credit
1/2/24	OR	What a great way to start the New Year	Albany Democrat-Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, Renter Tax Credit
1/24/24	OR	Bipartisan win	Columbia Gorge News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
2/1/24	OR	Pro-EW, Pro Child Tax Credit	Eugene Weekly	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
1/2/24	OR	Voices can turn the tide to end hunger	Corvallis Gazette-Times	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
1/2/24	OR	Voices can turn the tide to end hunger	Albany Democrat-Herald	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit

3/14/24	OR	Lift People Out of Poverty	Eugene Weekly	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Pennsylvania media</u>					
1/1/24	PA	People who give hope when poverty rises	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit, housing
1/19/24	PA	Child Tax Credit should be renewed	Altoona Mirror	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
2/5/24	PA	WIC changes childrens' lives, but not every life it could change	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/5/24	PA	Congress must ensure millions of children don't face hunger in America	Patriot News	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/15/23	PA	Having a baby in America should be easier	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to South Carolina media</u>					
3/10/24	SC	Fully Fund SNAP	The State	Letter to the editor	U.S. hunger/SNAP
3/27/24	SC	Senators blocking tax cut for families for political gain	The Sumter Item	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to Texas media</u>					
1/24/24	TX	A billionaire gambler gave Abbott \$6 million. It's time for Texans to reclaim their democracy.	Houston Chronicle	Op-ed	Advocacy
2/2/24	TX	Listen to Results	Dallas Morning News	Letter to the editor	Advocacy
2/4/24	TX	Be a voter and an advocate	Dallas Morning News	Letter to the editor	Advocacy

3/17/24	TX	Back expanded child tax credit	Dallas Morning News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/20/24	TX	Promote expanded child tax credit	Dallas Morning News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
4/7/24	TX	Long-term changes	Houston Chronicle	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, IRS Direct File

Go to Utah media

2/25/24	UT	Child tax credit actually saves money. Romney and Lee should support the bill that expands it.	Salt Lake Tribune	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
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Go to Washington state media

1/23/24	WA	Cutting child poverty would help fulfill the dream	Yakima Herald-Republic	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
2/4/24	WA	Kudos to Congress for looking out for kids	Kitsap Sun	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/6/24	WA	Yes, your vote — and your voice — matters	Yakima Herald-Republic	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
3/15/24	WA	Congress should act on housing	The Columbian	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, Renter Tax Credit
3/20/24	WA	No title	Cascadia Daily News	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit

Go to West Virginia media

3/2/24	WV	CTC can help end child hunger	The Dominion Post	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
3/21/24	WV	Families need tax relief	The Exponent Telegram	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit

3/31/24	WV	Capito, Manchin must support CTC bill	The Dominion Post	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit
<u>Go to National media</u>					
1/1/24	US	Feel-good policies	Costco Connection	Letter to the editor	Advocacy
1/2/24	US	In the World's Wealthiest Country, Housing Should Be a Human Right	PopularResistance.org	Op-ed	Housing
1/2/24	US	In the World's Wealthiest Country, Housing Should Be a Human Right and a Community Builder	Scheerpost	Blog feature	Housing
1/17/24	US	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Lawmakers Have a Chance to Bring It Back.	Other Words	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/19/24	US	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Congress Has a Chance to Bring It Back	Counter Punch	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/19/23	US	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Lawmakers Have a Chance to Bring it Back.	The Good Men Project	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/23/24	US	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Lawmakers Have a Chance to Bring It Back.	Inequality.org	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/23/24	US	The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life: Lawmakers Have A Chance To Bring It Back	Eurasia Review	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit
1/31/24	US	Lawmakers Must Fully Fund the WIC Program	Other Words	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/3/24	US	Why WIC Matters	Counter Punch	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/5/24	US	Lawmakers Must Fully Fund the WIC Program	Scheerpost	Blog feature	Hunger, WIC
2/7/24	US	Lawmakers Must Fully Fund The WIC Program	Eurasia Review	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC

2/13/24	US	Half of Babies — Including Mine — Rely on WIC. But Unless Congress Acts, Millions Could Face Food Insecurity.	Inequality.org	Op-ed	Hunger, WIC
2/14/24	US	Having a Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe	Other Words	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
2/18/24	US	The US Needs Paid Parental and Medical Leave	Common Dreams	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
2/26/24	US	Having a Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe	Inequality.org	Op-ed	Childcare, Child Tax Credit
3/26/24	US	Final Push to Save Expanded Child Tax Credit as Senate Hopes Dim	The 74	News article	Child Tax Credit
3/28/24	US	Final Push to Save Expanded Child Tax Credit as Senate Hopes Dim	LA School Report	News article	Child Tax Credit
4/3/24	US	Rents Are Unaffordable Nationwide. A Renter's Tax Credit Would Help.	Other Words	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/25/24	US	Homeless mother calls for renter's tax credit to make housing affordable	People's World	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/6/24	US	A Renter's Tax Credit Would Help People Like Me Stay in Our Homes	Common Dreams	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/6/24	US	Create a Bright Spot	3 rd Act Magazine	Letter to the editor	Child Tax Credit, global education
4/7/24	US	Rents Are Unaffordable: A Renter's Tax Credit Would Help	Eurasia Review	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/8/24	US	We Need a Renters' Tax Credit to Make Housing More Affordable	Counter Punch	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/9/24	US	Rents Are Unaffordable Nationwide. A Renter's Tax Credit Would Help.	Inequality.org	Op-ed	Renter Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit
4/15/24	US	The Reality and Complexity of Homelessness in America	Coalition on Human Needs blog	Blog post	Housing

4/17/24	US	Lawmakers Should Spend a Night in a Homeless Shelter	Other Words	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit, SNAP
4/19/24	US	Lawmakers Should Spend a Night in a Homeless Shelter	Counter Punch	Op-ed	Child Tax Credit, SNAP

Alaska media

Child care assistance

March 21, 2024

While our state Legislature works to make “Alaska friendly to Alaska families” by addressing Alaska’s child care crisis, our U.S. senators can provide critical support: They can follow the U.S. House’s lead to expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC).

The U.S. House has passed this bipartisan tax bill that expands the CTC for low-income families. Families making less than \$60,000 could see their CTC increase an average of \$900 per year. This will make it easier for millions of parents to make ends meet.

Child care and early education costs comprise as much as one-third of an Alaska family’s budget. The CTC is critical for offsetting this burden.

Every day the Senate delays is another day families can’t make ends meet. Our senators must put Alaska families first. I urge Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan to pass the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act now.

— **Sara Buckingham, Eagle River**

<https://www.adn.com/opinions/letters/2024/03/21/letter-child-care-assistance/>

Arizona media

Benefits of the CTC

February 7, 2024

Editor: The discourse on expanding the Child Tax Credit through the American Families and Workers Act is steeped in the debate over its short-term impact versus long-term benefits. Critics contend that the bill might disincentivize parents' workforce engagement and marital commitment. However, this reductionist perspective does not acknowledge various interplaying factors which low-income families must face.

The termination of the CTC expansion in 2021 coincided with a notable drop in employment levels, underscoring the inverse connection between financial support and workforce participation. Specifically, the escalating cost of child care plays a role in drops of employment levels. Opponents also challenge the credit's efficacy for married parents, invoking "Two-Parent Privilege" based on purported benefits of two-parent households. Yet, societal shifts, such as a focus on individualism and career-oriented lifestyles, contribute significantly to declining marriage rates, with tax incentives being just one factor.

The Social Genome Model's analysis of 2021 data showed that children of CTC recipients exhibit higher birth weights, improved math and reading scores, and overall enhanced behavior. Recent Urban Institute findings reinforce the long-term benefits, correlating CTC payments with heightened academic achievement and future income predictions for children. Advocating for Congress to prioritize children and bolster intergenerational mobility, the call is to recognize the tangible, enduring positive outcomes of the Expanded Child Tax Credit.

— **Karina Garavito, Phoenix**

https://www.havasunews.com/opinion/karina-garavito-benefits-of-the-ctc/article_b6c161b2-c63f-11ee-bcfe-6b38761e8bda.html



Senators urged to support act for American families

March 3, 2024

In an era marked by deep political divisions, the recent passing of the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act offers a glimmer of hope that bipartisanship remains possible. A notable provision of this act is the expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) for low-income families. This expansion is critical as it provides much-needed relief to families struggling to make ends meet, particularly amidst rising housing and food costs.

While the bill is not without its flaws, it represents a significant step forward in supporting American families. However, its journey is not complete; it now awaits approval in the Senate. Unfortunately, some senators are hesitant to support even this modest expansion, arguing it is too generous. They propose cuts to family benefits while safeguarding corporate tax breaks — a move that not only denies vital assistance to struggling families but also jeopardizes the bill's passage altogether.

As our senators, Sen. Sinema and Sen. Kelly, return from recess next week, I implore them to champion this bill and urge leadership to bring it to a vote. We cannot afford to squander this opportunity to alleviate the financial burdens faced by countless families across our nation. Let us prioritize the well-being of our children and families by supporting measures that truly make a difference.

— **Rayna Castillo, Flagstaff**

https://azdailysun.com/opinion/letters/letter-to-the-editor-senators-urged-to-support-act-for-american-families/article_326437c2-d72f-11ee-aa53-3b32cb5feebea.html

Urge Senate to Expand the Child Tax Credit

March 3, 2024

Did you know the House approved a bipartisan tax bill, known as the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, that would raise the Child Tax Credit (CTC) for American families? Families earning less than \$60,000 could see a \$900 yearly increase, providing much-needed relief. Despite this, the bill faces challenges in the Senate from some senators looking to cut CTC benefits in favor of corporate tax breaks. Did you know in 2022, the median CEO compensation package was \$14.5 million? The average American makes .3% of the median CEO compensation package. Despite what one may hear through the grapevine, it's important to note that this expansion will not harm employment rates, worsen the budget deficit, or create new benefits for immigrant children. Families are feeling financially strained without Senate alignment & action. It's crucial for senators to prioritize families over politics and swiftly pass the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act. Let's come together to support the CTC expansion and uplift the American people!

— **Chloe Harris, East side**

https://tucson.com/opinion/article_024731bc-d67a-11ee-b20d-171ba525046b.html

California media



Lawmakers Must Fully Fund the WIC Program

Half of all babies — including mine — rely on this essential program. But unless Congress acts, millions could face food insecurity.

By Candace Baker

February 1, 2024

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities, and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so that she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

And let me tell you — WIC was a game-changer!

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

I also was able to get the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help with our food needs. And because of these programs, I was able to go back to school, get my high school diploma, enroll in college, and graduate Magna Cum Laude. I was even able to become a volunteer mentor with a federally funded program called Second Chance to help people who served prison time reenter society in a healthy, productive way.

Families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications, and negative impacts on their health and well being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

I now have four children. All four benefited greatly from the WIC program, just as all who are eligible deserve to do. I believe in everything WIC does — I even took a job there helping with breastfeeding support. I'm also an Expert on Poverty at the anti-poverty organization RESULTS. These opportunities allow me to advocate for the programs that supported me when I was in need.

I need your help to ensure that Congress does the same. We must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is a mother, fierce advocate for anti-poverty programs, and Expert on Poverty at RESULTS from Indianapolis, Indiana.

<https://www.laprogressive.com/social-justice/lawmakers-must-fully-fund-the-wic-program>



Having A Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe

By Lindsay K. Saunders

February 19, 2024

FAMILY PLANNING - I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up.

My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

While I was on unpaid maternity leave that cost us our health benefits, my husband was let go from his job. Already reliant on WIC — the federal food aid program for women, infants, and children — we were forced to go to food pantries, apply for Medicaid, and referred to a diaper bank. We were in survival mode: exhausted, stressed out, and worried.

Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

I wondered: Why doesn't the U.S. have a paid parental leave policy?

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. Now the monthly cost is almost twice our mortgage. In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27

other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation, and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind. The stress took its toll, and my husband and I separated in spring 2023.

I wondered: If only we'd had more support, would we have made it?

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends. I work so hard as a single mom to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want, and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning, or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support over 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the Child Tax Credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly Child Tax Credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40 percent before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

(Lindsay K. Saunders is a North Carolina mother and dedicated advocate for RESULTS Educational Fund, a national anti-poverty organization. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.)

<https://www.citywatchla.com/wellness/28453-having-a-child-shouldnt-cause-financial-catastrophe>

EAST BAY TIMES

Lee's legacy marked by love and kindness

March 15, 2024

Re: "Lee will leave inspired legacy" (Page A1, March 10).

I was moved by John Woolfolk's article on Rep. Barbara Lee's life and legacy after 25 years in Congress.

I consider her a champion in ending poverty. Her wisdom and patience in pushing for effective programs such as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB and Malaria, and global vaccination programs (way before COVID), as well as U.S. tax policies like the Child Tax Credit to help people lift themselves out of poverty saved millions of lives. I will miss her as my representative in Congress and hope her successor will be as effective and persistent in her work with congressional colleagues on both sides of the aisle as well as with constituents to fund and expand those worthwhile programs.

Thank you, Rep. Lee, for your love and kindness.

— **Susan Oehser, Oakland**

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2024/03/14/letters-1652/>

Reprinted in:

The Mercury News

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2024/03/14/letters-1652/>



Rents Are Too High Nationwide: A Renters' Tax Credit Would Help

A monthly tax credit that capped housing costs at 30 percent of income could keep millions of Americans—including me—in our homes.

By Ashley Dines

April 11, 2024

I spent my first birthday in a shelter. Decades later, after doing all I was supposed to do to lift myself up out of poverty, I'm sofa hopping with my children.

I live in Las Vegas, where I work on a program helping low-income women and children find support to keep a roof over their heads and food in their bellies. When I enrolled in the program myself, the supervisors recognized my ability to lead and offered me this job.

I love my work, and the pay is solidly above minimum wage. Given my humble beginnings, anyone would say I'm a success story. Except I'm currently homeless.

There is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

Rents are astronomically high. In Las Vegas, the average household now needs to make at least \$70,000 a year to afford rent. I make a decent full-time salary—but not that much.

It's not a problem unique to me or to Vegas. According to the Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

When a huge chunk of your paycheck goes to rent or the mortgage, there's little leftover for an emergency. And most Americans — 56 percent of us — can't pay for an unexpected emergency of \$1,000. A surprise dental bill, medical bill, or car repair can send us spiraling into poverty.

That's what happened to me. My mother had to be hospitalized, I separated from my children's father, and my car broke down. I lost everything — almost literally overnight.

I first had to help my mother. She was my childcare provider, but she's now disabled. Then my cell phone bill payments lapsed for two months, and I had to pay in full to keep my only source of communication turned on. I had to fix my car to get to work and get the kids where they needed to go. Legal bills piled up from trying to secure custody and child support.

I quickly fell behind on rent. The next thing I know, the constable was at my door — forcing me, my two kids, and my disabled mother out of the apartment and down the stairs. That proved too challenging for my mother, and I had to take her back to the hospital immediately.

Again, I work full time and make decent money. But many people are like me — we fall into the gap where our income is too high for assistance but too low for living.

Many people are like me — we fall into the gap where our income is too high for assistance but too low for living.

Often, just a little bit of help could keep us from falling into homelessness, joblessness, or worse. If rental assistance were expanded to people making less than a housing wage, or if the pandemic-era expanded Child Tax Credit were still in place, I wouldn't have been evicted.

We need to bring that expanded Child Tax Credit back. Antipoverty organizations are also calling for a new Renter's Tax Credit.

Unlike homeowners who get a mortgage tax credit, renters don't get any tax benefit for paying month after month. With a Renter's Tax Credit, renters who pay more than 30 percent of our paychecks on housing would get a monthly credit to bring their housing costs down to that percentage.

That would help more of us stay in our homes, keep our jobs, and afford basics like food and child care. It could also reduce the need for more complicated safety net supports.

April is National Fair Housing Month. If we want everyone to have a fair chance to thrive, we can start now by ensuring access to stable, affordable housing.

This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

The opinions expressed here are solely the author's and do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of the LA Progressive.

Ashley Dines is a mother of two and an expert on poverty with RESULTS from Las Vegas, Nevada.

<https://www.laprogressive.com/housing-and-homlessness/rents-are-too-high-nationwide>

Colorado media

Daily Camera

Children and poverty don't belong in the same sentence

April 10, 2024

Fintan Steele poses some basic questions about working together, which requires a commitment to openness and flexibility. ("Is working together toward a shared set of truths even possible anymore?" by Fintan Steele, Daily Camera, April 3, 2024.) One key is the shared set of truths, that we all agree on. Recently the House of Representatives passed the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act with an overwhelming bipartisan majority. Could it be because 16 million American children who would have a better future, including half a million lifted out of poverty? Seems like helping children is something we agree upon. But in the two months since this ladder out of poverty passed the House, the Senate has not considered the bill. Same two parties that cooperated in the House and joined together to pass this compassionate bill. Sadly it seems, the question of who gets the credit (in an election year) is holding it back. Fortunately, by calling our senators, 202-224-3121, and asking them to pass this powerful piece of legislation, there is still a chance. The children deserve it, even in an election year, no matter who gets the credit.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.**

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2024/04/10/letters-to-the-editor-running-out-of-road-on-green-transition-lift-children-out-of-poverty-teslas-are-safest-cars-on-the-road/>

Florida media

Orlando Sentinel

Congress must expand Child Tax Credit

January 9, 2024

The holidays are a time when many look back at what they accomplished over the last year. When it comes to members of Congress, there is little to celebrate from 2023. They did little more than keep the lights on.

The most recent census data shows that child poverty is rising dramatically, primarily because of cuts to the Child Tax Credit for families with low income. Yet, did Congress lift a finger in 2023 to help kids get out of poverty? Not one.

In 2024, our children deserve better. In January, congressional leaders hope to pass new tax breaks for corporations. If that tax package does not include an expansion of the CTC that significantly reduces child poverty, it should be rejected.

For the new year, instead of big promises and little progress, members of Congress should talk less and do more. They can start by putting our children first and expanding the Child Tax Credit.

— **Doreen Perry, Winter Park**

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2024/01/09/letters-financial-disclosure-bill-cellphones-while-driving-courts-can-stop-trump/>



The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Bring It Back.

By Clara Moore

January 21, 2024

From childhood on, I've spent my life haunted by the ghost of poverty.

A myth exists in America that financial well-being follows if we just work hard and make good choices. But it's not that simple. At some point, most of us face unforeseen obstacles — from physical or mental health challenges to lost jobs, economic downturns, and natural disasters.

Along with low wages and other structural causes of poverty, that puts financial well-being out of reach for about 140 million people in this country, the Poor People's Campaign estimates.

The reality of poverty isn't even close to the stereotype propagated by politicians who want only to fund the military and subsidize the rich while cutting everything else. This isn't a lifestyle one chooses by being lazy and getting fat off some mythical government largesse.

For many of us, poverty means working multiple low-wage jobs and still being short on rent, child care, food, or the energy bill. Poverty means you don't have stable transportation and live in fear of anyone in your family needing health care.

It means your children go without good winter boots or new clothes because you need the lights to stay on. It means there's no time or money for anything beyond the scrape of daily life — no waterparks, no road trips, no relief.

People don't choose this lifestyle. It's created by policymakers who prioritize corporate profit and bloated military spending over investing in families in this country. Yet they expect poor people to be the ones who feel ashamed.

At one point I was living the American Dream. I'd been a successful chef, even bought a house at 23. But the 2008 collapse flipped my mortgage upside down, and the single investment I'd been able to make for my future crumbled.

other-wordsA few years later, after the birth of my child, I was cast back into the same poverty I'd grown up with. Programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC — the program to support women, infants, and children — kept our heads above water while I returned to university to complete an unfinished Bachelor's degree. But our heads dipped under a few times. It was exhausting.

By the time I'd completed a graduate program and we'd eked out some stability, the pandemic hit. But this time, the help was different.

The expanded and enhanced Child Tax Credit in President Biden's American Rescue Plan not only helped me pay my rent and monthly bills — it helped me be a better mom. Relieved of some financial anxiety, I could spend more time with my daughter and commit to the post-graduate job search, ultimately getting the good job that I have today.

Now I'm financially stable for the first time in my life. But tens of millions of others won't get that same chance unless lawmakers act. Congress let the expanded Child Tax Credit expire at the end of 2021, even though it had cut child poverty in half. Subsequently, child poverty immediately skyrocketed — a disaster.

But now, Congress again has a chance to expand the Child Tax Credit in a tax package that may pass soon. Frustratingly, the package gives more tax breaks to corporations that already pay little to no taxes, even as it modestly expands the Child Tax Credit again — although by less than before — and improves the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the new credit would lift 400,000 children out of poverty, make 3 million children less poor, and help a substantial number of the remaining 19 million poor children currently excluded from the full benefit.

It's necessary, but not enough — too much money in the bill goes to corporations that don't need it. Again, investment priorities are skewed in favor of the wealthy and corporations.

It's only when we prioritize the well-being of families that we will see families thrive.

Clara Moore is a researcher and mom who lives in Newark, New Jersey. She shares her experiences in poverty as an advocate with RESULTS Educational Fund. All opinions expressed are her own and do not represent her employer.

<https://flaglerlive.com/the-child-tax-credit-changed-my-life-bring-it-back/#gsc.tab=0>

The child tax credit changed my life; lawmakers have a chance to bring it

By Clara Moore

January 30, 2024

From childhood on, I've spent my life haunted by the ghost of poverty.

A myth exists in America that financial well-being follows if we just work hard and make good choices. But it's not that simple. At some point, most of us face unforeseen obstacles — from physical or mental health challenges to lost jobs, economic downturns and natural disasters.

Along with low wages and other structural causes of poverty, these obstacles put financial well-being out of reach for about 140 million people in this country, the Poor People's Campaign estimates.

The reality of poverty isn't even close to the stereotype propagated by politicians who want only to fund the military and subsidize the rich while cutting everything else. This isn't a lifestyle one chooses by being lazy and getting fat off some mythical government largesse.

For many of us, poverty means working multiple low-wage jobs and still being short on rent, child care, food or the energy bill. Poverty means you don't have stable transportation and live in fear of anyone in your family needing health care.

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At one point, I was living the American dream. I'd been a successful chef, even bought a house at 23. But the 2008 collapse flipped my mortgage upside down, and the single investment I'd been able to make for my future crumbled.

A few years later, after the birth of my child, I was cast back into the same poverty I'd grown up with. Programs like Medicaid, SNAP and WIC — the program to support women, infants and children — kept our heads above water while I returned to university to complete an unfinished bachelor's degree. But our heads dipped under a few times. It was exhausting.

By the time I'd completed a graduate program and we'd eked out some stability, the pandemic hit. But this time, the help was different.

The expanded and enhanced Child Tax Credit in President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan not only helped me pay my rent and monthly bills — it helped me be a better mom. Relieved of some financial anxiety, I could spend more time with my daughter and commit to the post-graduate job search, ultimately getting the good job that I have today.

Now, I'm financially stable for the first time in my life. But tens of millions of others won't get that same chance unless lawmakers act. Congress let the expanded Child Tax Credit expire at the end of 2021, even though it had cut child poverty in half. Subsequently, child poverty immediately skyrocketed — a disaster.

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Clara Moore is a researcher and mom who lives in Newark, New Jersey. She shares her experiences in poverty as an advocate with RESULTS Educational Fund. All opinions expressed are her own and do not represent her employer. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/2024/01/30/the-child-tax-credit-changed-my-life-lawmakers-have-a-chance-to-bring-it-back-opinion/>

Tallahassee Democrat.

Elected officials must take a bold approach on addressing affordable housing issues

January 31, 2024

In response to Jim Croteau's Your Turn, I want to emphasize how alarming the housing issue is. We've seen dramatic increases in rent prices after the COVID-19 pandemic but minimum improvement in living wages, which creates housing insecurity and can lead to homelessness.

The government introduced several initiatives for affordable housing, but most of these programs are inadequately funded and have long waiting lists. Combined with other efficiency issues, few families benefit from these programs while the rest must make do. The lack of stable housing impacts multiple areas in life, such as childcare and employment, and if we want to see our state thriving, we must demand bold actions from our officials and hold them accountable.

The idea to involve local universities to build safer and accessible neighborhoods is promising, but it will only target people affiliated with these establishments. Families outside that circle would still struggle with rising rent prices and pay 50% or more of their income. As we see more apartment complexes built around the city, affordable housing options should increase as well. This way, more people will retain stable employment, balance their income, and rent, and contribute to the housing market.

— **Daiana Surkova, Tallahassee**

No online link



Time for Renters' Tax Credit

April 7, 2024

By Ashley Dines

I spent my first birthday in a shelter. Decades later, after doing all I was supposed to do to lift myself up out of poverty, I'm sofa hopping with my children.

I live in Las Vegas, where I work on a program helping low-income women and children find support to keep a roof over their heads and food in their bellies. When I enrolled in the program myself, the supervisors recognized my ability to lead and offered me this job.

I love my work, and the pay is solidly above minimum wage. Given my humble beginnings, anyone would say I'm a success story. Except I'm currently homeless.

Rents are astronomically high. In Las Vegas, the average household now needs to make at least \$70,000 a year to afford rent. I make a decent full-time salary — but not that much.

It's not a problem unique to me or to Vegas. According to the Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

When a huge chunk of your paycheck goes to rent or the mortgage, there's little leftover for an emergency. And most Americans — 56 percent of us — can't pay for an unexpected emergency of \$1,000. A surprise dental bill, medical bill, or car repair can send us spiraling into poverty.

That's what happened to me. My mother had to be hospitalized, I separated from my children's father, and my car broke down. I lost everything — almost literally overnight.

I first had to help my mother. She was my childcare provider, but she's now disabled. Then my cell phone bill payments lapsed for two months, and I had to pay in full to keep my only source of communication turned on. I had to fix my car to get to work and get the kids where they needed to go. Legal bills piled up from trying to secure custody and child support.

I quickly fell behind on rent. The next thing I know, the constable was at my door — forcing me, my two kids, and my disabled mother out of the apartment and down the stairs. That proved too challenging for my mother, and I had to take her back to the hospital immediately.

Again, I work full time and make decent money. But many people are like me — we fall into the gap where our income is too high for assistance but too low for living.

Often, just a little bit of help could keep us from falling into homelessness, joblessness, or worse. If rental assistance were expanded to people making less than a housing wage, or if the pandemic-era expanded Child Tax Credit were still in place, I wouldn't have been evicted.

We need to bring that expanded Child Tax Credit back. Antipoverty organizations are also calling for a new Renter's Tax Credit.

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April is National Fair Housing Month. If we want everyone to have a fair chance to thrive, we can start now by ensuring access to stable, affordable housing.

Ashley Dines is a mother of two and an expert on poverty with Results from Las Vegas, Nevada.

<https://flaglerlive.com/time-for-renters-tax-credit/#gsc.tab=0>

Hawai'i media

Let's put an end to 'shameful situation'

February 15, 2023

Nicholas Kristof's exposé on the neglect of America's children is shocking ("We Americans neglect our children," Tribune-Herald, Feb. 8).

Fortunately, there are solutions, including one that is on the way to the Senate after passing the House. This is a call to action for us to make a difference by calling on our senators to pass this legislation that will expand the child tax credit, lifting 400,000 children out of poverty.

Why not send them Mr. Kristof's opinion piece and ask them to make sure this shameful situation our children face comes to an end?

Together, we can make it an issue that matters so Congress will pass this and other initiatives to end the scourges of poverty in the world's richest country.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.**

<https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2024/02/15/opinion/your-views-for-february-15-7/>

Illinois media



How child tax credit changes lives — Clara Moore

By Clara Moore

January 26, 2024

From childhood on, I've spent my life haunted by the ghost of poverty.

A myth exists in America that financial well-being follows if we just work hard and make good choices. But it's not that simple. At some point, most of us face unforeseen obstacles — from physical or mental health challenges to lost jobs, economic downturns, and natural disasters.

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At one point I was living the American Dream. I'd been a successful chef, even bought a house at 23. But the 2008 collapse flipped my mortgage upside down, and the single investment I'd been able to make for my future crumbled.

A few years later, after the birth of my child, I was cast back into the same poverty I'd grown up with. Programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC — the program to support women, infants, and children — kept our heads above water while I returned to university to complete an unfinished Bachelor's degree. But our heads dipped under a few times. It was exhausting.

By the time I'd completed a graduate program and we'd eked out some stability, the pandemic hit. But this time, the help was different.

The expanded and enhanced Child Tax Credit in President Biden's American Rescue Plan not only helped me pay my rent and monthly bills — it helped me be a better mom. Relieved of some financial anxiety, I could spend more time with my daughter and commit to the post-graduate job search, ultimately getting the good job that I have today.

Now I'm financially stable for the first time in my life. But tens of millions of others won't get that same chance unless lawmakers act. Congress let the expanded Child Tax Credit expire at the end of 2021, even though it had cut child poverty in half. Subsequently, child poverty immediately skyrocketed — a disaster.

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Clara Moore is a researcher and mom. This article was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://www.myjournalcourier.com/opinion/article/lawmakers-chance-bring-child-tax-credit-back-18619131.php>



Lawmakers must fully fund WIC program — Candace Baker

By Candace Baker

February 19, 2024

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities, and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so that she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

And let me tell you — WIC was a game-changer.

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It

helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

I also was able to get the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help with our food needs. And because of these programs, I was able to go back to school, get my high school diploma, enroll in college, and graduate Magna Cum Laude. I was even able to become a volunteer mentor with a federally funded program called Second Chance to help people who served prison time reenter society in a healthy, productive way.

Families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications, and negative impacts on their health and well being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

I now have four children. All four benefited greatly from the WIC program, just as all who are eligible deserve to do. I believe in everything WIC does — I even took a job there helping with breastfeeding support. I'm also an Expert on Poverty at the anti-poverty organization RESULTS. These opportunities allow me to advocate for the programs that supported me when I was in need.

I need your help to ensure that Congress does the same. We must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is an advocate for anti-poverty programs and expert on poverty at RESULTS in Indianapolis. This article was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://www.myjournalcourier.com/opinion/article/lawmakers-fully-fund-wic-program-candace-baker-18654152.php>

**lowa
media**

Times-Republican

Lawmakers must fully fund the WIC program

February 2, 2024

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities, and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so that she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

And let me tell you — WIC was a game-changer!

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

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Families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications, and negative impacts on their health and well being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

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I need your help to ensure that Congress does the same. We must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is a mother, fierce advocate for anti-poverty programs, and Expert on Poverty at RESULTS from Indianapolis, Indiana. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://www.timesrepublican.com/opinion/columnists/2024/02/lawmakers-must-fully-fund-the-wic-program/>

Maine media

Portland Press Herald

Bill helps children living in poverty

February 24

I recently read a piece in the Portland Press Herald about increasing awareness and urging Mainers to claim tax credits for which they are eligible. The article touched on the Child Tax Credit, which was expanded during the pandemic and now has the potential to provide support to more children once again. With H.R. 7024, recently passed in the House and now approaching the Senate, still on the line, Maine voters should not only know their eligibility for tax credits from previous years, they should look toward a far more impactful goal — real change at the federal level.

The economic turmoil of the past two years has hit children, one of our most vulnerable populations, most significantly.

My thanks to U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree for voting to pass this essential bill in the House. Though the bill is imperfect, I urge our senators to do the same. Passing H.R. 7024 in the Senate is an opportunity for Sens. Collins and King to advocate for their constituents and expand the Child Tax Credit for children living in Maine and beyond.

— **Natalie Jones, Stockton Springs**

<https://www.pressherald.com/2024/02/24/letter-bill-helps-children-living-in-poverty/>

Massachusetts media



Lawmakers must fully fund the WIC program

By Candace Baker

February 12, 2024

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<https://itemlive.com/2024/02/12/lawmakers-must-fully-fund-the-wic-program/>

The Berkshire Eagle

We must prevent a decrease of WIC funding due to congressional inaction

February 17, 2024

To the editor: We rapidly approach March 1, when millions of women and infants may lose their nutrition benefits as WIC — the special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children — runs out of funding due to the 2024 budget negotiations.

“If funded at the same level as the January 2024 continuing resolution, WIC would face a shortfall of \$1 billion, equivalent to 1.5 months of benefits for the nearly 6.7 million people that rely on the program,” according to the deputy under secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services and the assistant secretary for health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. That shortfall would mean 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their children won’t get necessary food and health assistance.

This one of many problems arising from congressional dysfunction should be a nonpartisan issue: decreasing child poverty and nourishing women and children. Yet it has become a victim of Congress’ inaction. Our future depends on the wellbeing of our children, which in turn depends on healthy nutrition prenatally and after.

Recently, the House passed a bipartisan tax package including an expansion of the child tax credit, 357-70. The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 expands the credit over the next three years so that more families with low incomes, including those with multiple children, can access the full credit amount. This would ensure that 16 million children receive some amount of this benefit. And we know from the 2021 expanded credit that this money contributes to decreasing food insecurity.

Now, with no time to spare, we must push the Senate to pass this law as well.

As one of the wealthiest nations in the world, it is a travesty for us to rank so poorly on measures like child poverty, infant and maternal mortality, and food insecurity. We

can and must do better. I invite you to not only participate actively in the upcoming elections but to continue to advocate for these measures post election. We have the privilege of constituency, which means that our voices are counted when reaching out to our legislators. They are in Congress because of us and to work for us.

— **Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

The writer is the Massachusetts Group co-leader of RESULTS.org, a nonpartisan anti-poverty advocacy organization.

https://www.berkshireagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-we-must-prevent-a-decrease-of-wic-funding-due-to-congressional-inaction/article_a6f74a28-ccdc-11ee-a6fc-0bfe9adbd3fc.html



Having A Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe

Author: Lindsay K. Saunders, OtherWords.org

February 19, 2024

In the wealthiest country on earth, welcoming a child should be a joy for families — not a financial trauma.

I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up.

My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

While I was on unpaid maternity leave that cost us our health benefits, my husband was let go from his job. Already reliant on WIC — the federal food aid program for women, infants, and children — we were forced to go to food pantries, apply for Medicaid, and referred to a diaper bank. We were in survival mode: exhausted, stressed out, and worried.

Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

I wondered: Why doesn't the U.S. have a paid parental leave policy?

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. Now the monthly cost is almost twice our mortgage.

In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27 other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation, and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind. The stress took its toll, and my husband and I separated in spring 2023.

I wondered: If only we'd had more support, would we have made it?

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends. I work so hard as a single mom to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want, and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning, or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support over 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the Child Tax Credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly Child Tax Credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40 percent before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

Lindsay K. Saunders is a North Carolina mother and dedicated advocate for RESULTS Educational Fund, a national anti-poverty organization. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://www.thequeenzone.com/having-a-child-shouldnt-cause-financial-catastrophe/>

Boston Herald

Child Tax Credit

March 25, 2024

How long must families wait? It's been nearly two months since the House passed a bipartisan expansion of the Child Tax Credit and sent it to the Senate. Estimates are that this bill will benefit 16 million children in families with low incomes, including 5.8 million kids under the age of six.

You would think that in an election year, Congress would be eager to pass a tax cut for families (and small businesses). But a few senators are blocking it for political gain. Families should not have to wait months for Congress to pass something that is both popular and necessary.

It is time for senators to show us their hands. If the bill passes, families win. If it fails, senators can explain to voters why they chose to keep children in poverty.

When the Senate returns to Washington after Easter, I urge our senators to demand an immediate vote and then vote YES on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

— **William Deignan, Medford**

<https://www.bostonherald.com/2024/03/25/letters-to-the-editor-601/>

Boston Herald

Renters need tax credit to ease sky-high costs

By Ashley Dines

April 13, 2024

I spent my first birthday in a shelter. Decades later, after doing all I was supposed to do to lift myself up out of poverty, I'm sofa hopping with my children.

I live in Las Vegas, where I work on a program helping low-income women and children find support to keep a roof over their heads and food in their bellies. When I enrolled in the program myself, the supervisors recognized my ability to lead and offered me this job.

I love my work, and the pay is solidly above minimum wage. Given my humble beginnings, anyone would say I'm a success story. Except I'm currently homeless.

There is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

Rents are astronomically high. In Las Vegas, the average household now needs to make at least \$70,000 a year to afford rent. I make a decent full-time salary—but not that much.

It's not a problem unique to me or to Vegas. According to the Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

When a huge chunk of your paycheck goes to rent or the mortgage, there's little leftover for an emergency. And most Americans — 56 percent of us — can't pay for an unexpected emergency of \$1,000. A surprise dental bill, medical bill, or car repair can send us spiraling into poverty.

That's what happened to me. My mother had to be hospitalized, I separated from my children's father, and my car broke down. I lost everything — almost literally overnight.

I first had to help my mother. She was my childcare provider, but she's now disabled. Then my cell phone bill payments lapsed for two months, and I had to pay in full to keep my only source of communication turned on. I had to fix my car to get to work and get the kids where they needed to go. Legal bills piled up from trying to secure custody and child support.

I quickly fell behind on rent. The next thing I know, the constable was at my door — forcing me, my two kids, and my disabled mother out of the apartment and down the stairs. That proved too challenging for my mother, and I had to take her back to the hospital immediately.

Again, I work full time and make decent money. But many people are like me — we fall into the gap where our income is too high for assistance but too low for living.

Often, just a little bit of help could keep us from falling into homelessness, joblessness, or worse. If rental assistance were expanded to people making less than a housing wage, or if the pandemic-era expanded Child Tax Credit were still in place, I wouldn't have been evicted.

We need to bring that expanded Child Tax Credit back. Antipoverty organizations are also calling for a new Renter's Tax Credit.

Unlike homeowners who get a mortgage tax credit, renters don't get any tax benefit for paying month after month. With a Renter's Tax Credit, renters who pay more than 30 percent of our paychecks on housing would get a monthly credit to bring their housing costs down to that percentage.

That would help more of us stay in our homes, keep our jobs, and afford basics like food and child care. It could also reduce the need for more complicated safety net supports.

April is National Fair Housing Month. If we want everyone to have a fair chance to thrive, we can start now by ensuring access to stable, affordable housing.

<https://www.bostonherald.com/2024/04/13/dines-renters-need-tax-credit-to-ease-sky-high-costs/>

Missouri media



The importance of home

By Kazmyn Ramos

January 4, 2024

Too many of us have to depend on sheer good luck to make it — especially when it comes to putting a roof over our heads.

We grow up hearing that hard work alone will lift us above the hardships we're born into. But many of us also watched as our parents worked two and three jobs, relied on extended family to watch us, and still struggled to afford stable housing. Far too many of us are living that same struggle ourselves.

It's not that we aren't resourceful. My grandmother, who barely scraped by with factory work and countless odd jobs, pulled together with neighbors who supported each other through a mutual aid network. Thanks to her resourcefulness, our community and luck, we had someplace to call home. That gave my mother the chance to become the first one in our family to go to college. I followed in her footsteps to attend graduate school.

We made it work. But I've learned through generational poverty that the lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest obstacles to thriving. I learned even more through my work with Healthy Families, a national, research-backed program.

I conducted home visits with low-income mothers, addressing maternal health, birth outcomes and child development. Their poverty was different from what I grew up with. Many of these mothers were immigrants with language barriers and no access to the extended networks, mutual aid, or stable housing that I had.

Evictions were rampant. I saw conditions that you wouldn't believe existed in the richest country in the world.

I'm a strong believer in mutual aid. But in the world's wealthiest nation, should we really have to rely solely on working people sharing their meager resources among

themselves? To eradicate poverty and housing instability, we're going to need more than that.

Nationally, a worker would need an hourly wage of at least \$28.58 to afford a modest two-bedroom rental — or nearly \$24 an hour for just one bedroom. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Almost half of low-income renters spend over 30% of their incomes on housing alone.

Building on my mother and grandmother's work in mutual aid, I've found community engagement to be invaluable — not only to connect families to housing, but also to organize our collective voices to push lawmakers toward solutions.

Solutions like building more affordable housing, more public housing, and more housing in general. Guaranteeing workers a living wage for their hard work. Making sure we have a strong social safety net so families can survive lean times.

Unfortunately, housing policy often takes human rights and the need for community out of the policy process. It focuses on zoning, commerce, profit-maximization and "protecting" wealthy communities from low-income neighbors. This does a disservice to the rich sense of community affordable housing can create.

Housing should be seen as a human right and a community builder, not a wealth builder. It should be a way to lift us all up rather than segregate us and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

The more we separate ourselves from our fellow humans, the more damage we do to all of us as a society. My mother and grandmother taught me that. I bet yours did too. So let's work together to make the dream of housing for all a reality.

Kazmyn Ramos is a program manager for an NGO that delivers cash to people in poverty, and is founder of the affordable housing nonprofit Seeking 1610, and a Poverty Expert at RESULTS. She lives in Indianapolis. This was distributed by OtherWords.org and is reprinted with permission.

https://www.columbiamissourian.com/opinion/guest_commentaries/the-importance-of-home/article_8f61fca2-ab24-11ee-9b7f-53f3f6108c4f.html



Support childhood tax credits for low-income families

January 8, 2024

I applaud your editorial, "Good start toward feeding hungry kids" (Globe, Jan. 3), which notes that Missouri has tentatively agreed to participate in a federal program that will provide assistance to food insecure students during the summer months.

Another action which Missouri's U.S. Sens. Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt can take to address childhood hunger is to support expansion of the Child Tax Credit.

The most recent census data shows that childhood poverty is rising dramatically, primarily because prior extensions to the Child Tax Credit were allowed to lapse, which led to the exclusion of 19 million children from the program's full benefits.

Evidence shows that when such benefits are provided, they are used for things like rent and food, thus reducing childhood poverty and hunger.

As Congress reconvenes this month, it is critical that the Child Tax Credit be extended to reach low-income families.

— **Greg Campbell, Creve Coeur**

https://www.joplinglobe.com/opinion/support-childhood-tax-credits-for-low-income-families/article_0cedd458-ae4e-11ee-88fe-6b3b8b4e53b3.html



Expand Child Tax Credit For Low-Income Families

January 22, 2024

The Jan. 5 Webster-Kirkwood Times notes the tax benefits available for older Americans (“Aging Taxpayers May be Eligible for Tax Breaks.”) While this group certainly deserves such breaks, low-income families also need financial relief. As Congress works on the FY2024 spending bill, it has the opportunity to expand the Child Tax Credit in a way that will allow coverage for more children in low-income families.

When the last Child Tax Credit expansion expired in 2021, 19 million children were excluded from the program, and child poverty increased dramatically. Congressional leaders must address this mistake and reinstate coverage for low-income families.

Missouri Senators Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt should support current bipartisan efforts to include an expanded Child Tax Credit in any final spending proposal.

— **Greg Campbell, Creve Coeur**

https://www.timesnewspapers.com/webster-kirkwoodtimes/expand-child-tax-credit-for-low-income-families/article_74553804-b60d-11ee-b704-2b0312879544.html

DAILY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Much-needed expansion of the Child Tax Credit

March 2, 2024

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my heartfelt commendation to the House of Representatives for passing the much-needed expansion of the Child Tax Credit. This pivotal legislation promises to alleviate the financial burdens of countless families across our nation, providing them with essential support in these challenging times.

The expanded Child Tax Credit is not just a financial relief but a significant investment in the future of our children. By making it easier for parents to afford necessities like food, clothing, and educational resources, we are laying a stronger foundation for the next generation to thrive. It's heartening to see our representatives recognize the importance of supporting families and taking concrete steps to ensure the well-being of our children.

As the bill moves to the Senate, I urge Sen. Jason Bean to consider the profound impact this expansion can have on families in our community and across the country. Sen. Bean's support is crucial in turning this bill into law, and I strongly encourage him to stand with the House of Representatives in championing the needs of our children and families.

We must come together, regardless of our political affiliations, to prioritize the welfare of our nation's children. I am hopeful that Sen. Bean will reflect on the long-term benefits of this legislation and lend his support to ensure its passage in the Senate.

I urge all readers to reach out to Sen. Bean and express their support for the Child Tax Credit expansion. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of our families and secure a brighter future for our children.

With respect,

Jessica Sicley, Harviell

<https://www.darnews.com/story/3031063.html>

No title

March 26, 2024

How long must families wait? It's been nearly two months since the House has passed a bipartisan expansion of the Child Tax Credit and sent it to the Senate. Estimates are that this bill will benefit 16 million children in families with low incomes, including 5.8 million kids under the age of six.

You would think that in an election year, Congress would be eager to pass a tax cut for families (and small businesses). But a few senators are blocking it for political gain. Families should not have to wait months for Congress to pass something that is both popular and necessary.

It is time for senators to show us their hands. If the bill passes, families win. If it fails, senators can explain to voters why they chose to keep children in poverty.

When the Senate returns to Washington after Easter, I urge our senators to demand an immediate vote and then vote YES on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

— **Suzanne Marienau, Ozark, MO**

https://www.bransontrilakesnews.com/perspectives/article_c8188bba-eb84-11ee-ad9e-2f6e153c2c27.html

Nevada media

Having a child shouldn't cause financial catastrophe

By Lindsay K. Saunders

February 20, 2024

I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up.

My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

While I was on unpaid maternity leave that cost us our health benefits, my husband was let go from his job. Already reliant on WIC — the federal food aid program for women, infants, and children — we were forced to go to food pantries, apply for Medicaid, and referred to a diaper bank. We were in survival mode: exhausted, stressed out, and worried.

Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

I wondered: Why doesn't the U.S. have a paid parental leave policy?

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. Now the monthly cost is almost twice our mortgage. In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27

other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation, and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind. The stress took its toll, and my husband and I separated in spring 2023.

I wondered: If only we'd had more support, would we have made it?

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends. I work so hard as a single mom to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want, and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning, or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support over 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the Child Tax Credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly Child Tax Credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40 percent before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

This column was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://nevadacurrent.com/2024/02/20/having-a-child-shouldnt-cause-financial-catastrophe/>

New Mexico media



We urgently need national action on the Child Tax Credit

By Roxanne Allen and Heidi Brooks / RESULTS.org

February 5, 2024

Way too many New Mexican children, about one in four, know what it is like to grow up in poverty. Child poverty is not about having the latest game or sneakers. It's about feeling hunger pangs, feeling scared, and feeling left out of all the good stuff.

Child poverty and its effects hurt families, children, and the finances of our country and our state. A 2019 report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine found that the realities of child poverty — unstable housing, frequent moves, inadequate nutrition, and high levels of stress — manifest later in life in lower educational attainment, poorer health, and lower earnings in adulthood. A 2018 study from Washington University in St. Louis calculated that child poverty costs the nation \$1.03 trillion per year, or 5.4% of GDP. Further, the researchers estimated that every dollar spent on reducing child poverty would save \$7 in costs avoided.

The New Mexico Legislature understands and recently passed a state Child Tax Credit, providing families up to \$600 per child per year, indexed for inflation. This state level CTC is a welcome help, but we also need national action.

Although tax credits for families with children enjoy bipartisan support, the federal Child Tax Credit has major flaws. For instance, if a family is too low-income, they do not receive the full per-child credit. A single mother of two children who earns \$15,000 per year receives a total of \$1,875 while a family making \$400,000 with two children receives \$4,000. Nationally, 19 million children receive less than the full credit; in New Mexico, that number is 168,000.

However, in 2021 we accomplished an amazing success thanks to one legislative act. We dramatically increased the CTC, paid it on a monthly basis, and eliminated income requirements so that even the lowest-income children were able to receive the full benefit. Doing this cut U.S. child poverty by 46% in less than a year, a stunning

outcome. In New Mexico this meant that 252,000 families with 420,000 children benefited with higher, more regular payments. Parents used that money in whatever way they needed most, but most used it for rent, child care, food, medical help, supplemental education, and transportation. And child poverty plummeted.

It is almost unbelievable, then, that the improved benefits were allowed to lapse, erasing most of the gains and putting 3.7 million children back into poverty, the sharpest rise ever of recorded U.S. child poverty rates.

There is some hope for a partial fix. The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 (HR 7024) just passed in the U.S. House by a huge margin, 357-70, with all of our House members from New Mexico voting for it. It would lift 500,000 children out of poverty and benefit about 80% of the 19 million children currently not getting full benefits.

Next step is the Senate, where the bill has passed in committee on a bipartisan basis and now needs a vote from the full Senate. New Mexico Sens. Ben Ray Luján and Martin Heinrich should actively engage with colleagues of both parties to secure this help for New Mexico children. Our job as citizens is to thank our House members, encourage our senators to vote for this first step, and plan to work for full benefits for all children next session.

https://www.abqjournal.com/opinion/span-class-print-trim-opinion-span-we-urgently-need-national-action-on-the-child-tax/article_a55f8f4e-c201-11ee-9565-ab1fd28e553c.html

New York media

How long must families wait for child tax credit?

March 26, 2024

To the Editor:

How long must families wait? It's been nearly two months since the House passed a bipartisan expansion of the Child Tax Credit and sent it to the Senate. Estimates are that this bill will benefit 16 million children in families with low incomes, including 5.8 million kids under the age of 6.

You would think that in an election year Congress would be eager to pass a tax cut for families (and small businesses), but a few senators are blocking it for political gain. Families should not have to wait months for Congress to pass something that is both popular and necessary.

It is time for senators to show us their hands. If the bill passes, families win. If it fails, senators can explain to voters why they chose to keep children in poverty.

When the Senate returns to Washington after Easter, I urge our senators to demand an immediate vote and then vote YES on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

— **Sincerely, Susan Joseph Rack, Trumansburg**

https://www.fltimes.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-how-long-must-families-wait-for-child-tax-credit/article_32dfe58c-e85c-11ee-9c34-834808ff4910.html

North Carolina media

The News&Observer

Child Tax Credit

January 7, 2024

When Congress reconvenes this week, there will be eight working days before the first of two deadlines to fund the government in 2024. There will be much debate about what should be funded. I vote for an expanded child tax credit. The tax code should not punish children because their caregivers have lower wage jobs, are disabled or cannot afford the child care needed to secure a job. I strongly encourage N.C. representatives and senators to back expanding the CTC to ensure this proven aid to lifting children out of poverty is available to those who need it most: families living in rural areas, parents/caregivers with disabilities, military caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren.

— **Patti Maxwell, Cary**

<https://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article283756603.html>

Lawmakers must fully fund WIC program

February 1, 2024

By Candace Baker

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

I also was able to get the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to help with our food needs. And because of these programs, I was able to go back to school, get my high school diploma, enroll in college and graduate magna cum laude. I was even able to become a volunteer mentor with a federally funded program called Second Chance to help people who served prison time reenter society in a healthy, productive way.

Families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications and negative impacts on their health and well-being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

I now have four children. All four benefited greatly from the WIC program, just as all who are eligible deserve to do. I believe in everything WIC does — I even took a job there helping with breastfeeding support. I'm also an expert on poverty at the anti-poverty organization RESULTS. These opportunities allow me to advocate for the programs that supported me when I was in need.

I need your help to ensure that Congress does the same. We must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is a mother, fierce advocate for anti-poverty programs and expert on poverty at RESULTS from Indianapolis, Indiana. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://restorationnewsmedia.com/articles/columns-butnercreedmoor/lawmakers-must-fully-fund-wic-program/>

Having a child shouldn't cause financial catastrophe

By Lindsay K. Saunders

February 16, 2024

I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up.

My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

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Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

I wondered: Why doesn't the U.S. have a paid parental leave policy?

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. The monthly cost is now almost twice our mortgage. In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27

other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind. The stress took its toll, and my husband and I separated in spring 2023.

I wondered: If only we'd had more support, would we have made it?

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends. I work so hard as a single mom to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support more than 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the child tax credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly child tax credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40% before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

Lindsay K. Saunders is a North Carolina mother and dedicated advocate for RESULTS Educational Fund, a national anti-poverty organization. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://restorationnewsmedia.com/articles/columns-butnercreedmoor/having-a-child-shouldnt-cause-financial-catastrophe/>

Reprinted in:

The logo for Reflector, featuring a green circle with a white letter 'R' inside, followed by the word 'Reflector' in a green, serif font.

https://www.reflector.com/opinion/editorial_columnists/lindsay-k-saunders-having-a-child-should-not-cause-financial-hardship/article_ca060942-d019-11ee-a3bc-2fd0d0393571.html

The Charlotte Observer

High Food Prices

March 31, 2024

Yesterday's prices are certainly not today's prices when it comes to buying groceries in 2024. While inflation has fallen in some areas, food prices have remained high, causing tighter budgets, especially for those I know who participate in food entitlement programs.

A new farm bill is crucial to food security. Seventy-five percent of the bill goes toward entitlement programs that help individuals, families and seniors get healthy food, with the SNAP program accounting for the largest share.

Last November, Congress passed a one-year extension of the farm bill. It expires Sept. 30, 2024. September is just months away, and for many people, food security fades with each passing month. Battles over the bill have begun. I urge North Carolina's representatives and senators in Congress to support a new farm bill. The time to act is now.

— **Corrine Johnson, Charlotte**

<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article287063610.html>

THE SYLVA HERALD

AND RURALITE

Budd, Tillis should move on Child Tax Credit

April 10, 2024

To the Editor:

Thanks for the NCNewsline piece on expanding the Child Tax Credit by Sharon Hirsch ("U.S. Senate should move on Child Tax Credit expansion", April 4). Ms. Hirsch hits all the right notes. It's amazing that the 2021 Child Tax Credit, which cut child poverty in half, was allowed to expire. Child poverty more than doubled after that.

The good news is that the U.S. Senate has an opportunity to get us at least part of the way back on child poverty. In January the divided U.S. House of Representatives voted 357-70 to pass HR 7024, Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024. This bill makes some needed improvements to the Child Tax Credit that would benefit over 500,000 North Carolina children and lift 500,000 children out of poverty across the country.

But HR 7024 is stuck in the Senate because of the opposition of a few senators. Senators Thom Tillis and Ted Budd should call on leadership to bring the bill to the floor of the Senate for a vote so that lower-income American families can get the support they need to raise productive future citizens and workers.

— **Ken Patterson, Asheville**

https://www.thesylvaherald.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/article_17480cf8-f74f-11ee-bfc0-e3a0088f080d.html

North Dakota media



Rep. Armstrong voted for extension of CTC; hoping Sens. Hoeven and Cramer will do the same

I thank Armstrong for voting in favor of the CTC expansion, and I ask Senators John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer to also vote yes.

February 10, 2024

To the Editor:

The front-page article of the Jan. 6, 2024, issue of the Grand Forks Herald featured the dramatic increase in homelessness in North Dakota this past year. For example, at the beginning of the school year, there were 106 homeless students enrolled in Grand Forks Public Schools, an increase over the previous year's count of 85. If we want our youth to thrive, this is unacceptable. No child should be without a home.

A recent study from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University reports that now half of all U.S. renters cannot afford to pay their rent. Our nation is facing a rolling crisis in housing that has not been adequately addressed. Both the cost of rent and the cost of a home have increased disproportionately compared with the incomes of most Americans. Homelessness is an inevitable result for the most vulnerable.

Now, Congress is voting on a tax package which includes a partial extension of the child tax credit so our lowest income families can also benefit. Rep. Kelly Armstrong voted in favor of the CTC, which passed in a 357 to 70 vote in the House on Jan. 31. Armstrong stated that the bill, which expands the child tax credit and adjusts it for inflation, is important for North Dakota. Nationwide, it is anticipated that 15 million children from low-income families will benefit.

I thank Armstrong for voting in favor of the CTC expansion, and I ask Senators John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer to also vote yes. I urge our congressional delegation to focus on ending homelessness now.

— **Kathleen Ness, Grand Forks**

<https://www.grandforksherald.com/opinion/letters/letter-rep-armstrong-voted-for-extension-of-ctc-hoping-sens-hoeven-and-cramer-will-do-the-same>



Senate must pass the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act

In North Dakota, an estimated 23,000 children will benefit from the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

March 30, 2024

To the Editor:

How long must families wait? It's been nearly two months since the House has passed a bipartisan expansion of the Child Tax Credit and sent it to the Senate. Estimates are that this bill will benefit 16 million children in families with low incomes, including 5.8 million kids under the age of six. In North Dakota, an estimated 23,000 will benefit.

It would make sense that in an election year, Congress would be eager to pass a tax cut for families (and small businesses). But a few senators are blocking it for political gain. Families should not have to wait months for Congress to pass something that is both popular and necessary.

It is time for senators to show us their hands. If the bill passes, families win. If it fails, senators can explain to voters why they chose to keep children in poverty.

When the Senate returns to Washington after Easter, I urge our senators, Sen. John Hoeven and Sen. Kevin Cramer, to demand an immediate vote and then vote YES on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

— **Kathleen Ness, Grand Forks**

<https://www.grandforksherald.com/opinion/letters/letter-senate-must-pass-the-tax-relief-for-american-families-and-workers-act>

Ohio media

THE PLAIN DEALER



Expanding the child tax credit to help needy families is the just and fair thing to do

January 08, 2024

As many of us just enjoyed Christmas and this beautiful time of year, I know there are a lot of families that are like mine used to be. We spent our money very carefully, not just at holiday time, but always, because we had such a limited amount. For years, we were always one emergency away from a financial crisis.

Every little bit helped, and I know every little bit can help countless families in Ohio. This is why the child tax credit is so impactful. It can bridge the gap between stability and stress.

I urge Congress -- especially Ohio Sens. Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance and my congressman, U.S. Rep. Max Miller - - to support legislation that restores the expanded child tax credit for low-income, needy families, helping them escape poverty and reducing their financial stress.

It is the just and fair thing to do.

— **Dolores Badar, Rocky River**

<https://www.cleveland.com/letters/2024/01/expanding-the-child-tax-credit-to-help-needy-families-is-the-just-and-fair-thing-to-do.html>

Oklahoma media



Expand tax credits that directly help working-class families

March 9, 2024

The U.S. House passed the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024, which would restore the expanded child tax credit, which was in place for 2021. It would beef up the credit to \$3,600 per child for those under age 6 and \$3,000 for older children. It would permanently make the credit fully refundable so more low-income families would qualify. The bill is pending in the U.S. Senate.

In a recent statement from U.S. Sen. Markwayne Mullin, he said, "The federal government needs to incentivize workforce participation, not encourage people to become dependents of the state."

The previous day, WalletHub released the report "Best & Worst States for Women in 2024," in which Oklahoma ranked 50th among all states and the District of Columbia. It ranked 44th in share of women living in poverty, 50th for insured women and 48th for preventative health care.

How can Mullin incentivize workforce participation when 50.9% of Oklahoma's population live in a state that hinders their ability to earn money, stay healthy and pay for health care?

Tax reliefs are meant to help single mothers working two jobs and still struggle with rent. Tax reliefs ought to be for 65-year-old widows who are physically unable to work and earn a living to pay rent.

Studies from 2021 have debunked the myth that tax credits discourage work. In fact, expansions to the child tax credit helped families maintain employment and even get new jobs.

Tax credits are there to elevate our friends and neighbors out of poverty so they can focus on getting an education instead of worrying about where their next meal is coming from.

As the Senate discusses the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, I urge Mullin and U.S. Sen. James Lankford to stand with our Oklahoma representatives and pass this act. Be the leadership Oklahoma so desperately needs.

— **Jacoby Gonzales, Tulsa**

https://tulsaworld.com/opinion/letters/letter-expand-tax-credits-that-directly-help-working-class-families/article_a948643c-dcb9-11ee-a5f3-43ebcb1ed3ca.html

THE OKLAHOMAN

Wage war against hunger, poverty

April 16, 2024

In response to: "Oklahoma governor's executive order to put higher education diversity programs under review."

Oklahoma politicians are fighting the wrong war. Instead of waging war on DEI initiatives, Native American tribes, and the so-called "woke movement," politicians need to focus on waging war against hunger and poverty in the state.

According to Hunger Free Oklahoma, 208,110 children aren't getting the nutrition they need, which translates to more than 1 in 5 children facing food insecurity.

The group also reported Oklahoma is one of five states with food insecurity rates above 14.5%. Their studies show students who go to school hungry have more behavioral and social problems in school, are at a higher risk of having lower math and reading scores, and have lower high school graduation rates.

Given these outcomes, politicians shouldn't have been upset or surprised when Oklahoma's State Report Card from the Oklahoma State Department of Education disclosed only 27% of students met or exceeded grade-level standards by scoring at or above the proficient level on the state test in math, reading and science.

What future do our children have to look forward to when such outcomes dim the lights of their bright minds?

Simply put, the biggest threat to our children and their future is hunger and food insecurity, which are caused by poverty. Our children need solutions such as the child tax credit and free lunch pilot programs to be implemented now.

Let this be a call to action for Oklahoma politicians to start implementing solutions that will keep hunger out of the classroom so our children can start to focus on learning and succeeding. Let's show our children we care by ensuring their basic needs are met.

— **Tiffany Tagbo, Oklahoma City**

<https://www.oklahoman.com/story/opinion/2023/12/16/letters-on-womens-health-hunger-cease-fire-third-party-candidates/71913071007/>

Oregon media



What a great way to start the New Year

January 2, 2024

Thanks for sharing Froma Harrop's thoughtful questions about the focus on current affordable housing solutions ("What do we really mean by affordable housing?," Dec. 26).

One Congressional initiative is a renter tax credit that would ensure people with low incomes wouldn't pay over 30% of their income for rent.

Renewing the expanded Child Tax Credit would go a long way toward making sure families can afford housing and food. These and other equity initiatives can go a long way toward keeping people housed.

We can remind our representatives in Congress to start with these solutions when they return this month. What a great way to start the New Year!

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington**

https://gazettetimes.com/opinion/letters/letter-what-a-great-way-to-start-the-new-year/article_10228cd4-915b-552a-8b66-bb6609176d7a.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Reprinted in:



https://democratherald.com/opinion/letters/letter-what-a-great-way-to-start-the-new-year/article_3442a010-a520-11ee-ade0-cf0c79f5d003.html

Bipartisan win

January 24, 2024

Exciting news: A bipartisan compromise on renewing the expanded Child Tax Credit, estimating this expansion will benefit 5 million children in families with low income, including lifting 500,000 children from poverty. Of course this proposed legislation still needs to pass the Senate and the House. Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO) and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) have led negotiations on this bipartisan tax package. Those who represent us need to hear this package needs to pass now! A quick call, 202-224-3121, asking them to support this initiative will make a difference and millions will thank you.

– **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.**

https://www.columbiagorgenews.com/opinion/your-voice-jan-24-2024/article_b371bcfa-b983-11ee-a8aa-133658ec37fa.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share



Pro-EW, Pro Child Tax Credit

February 1, 2024

Great to see Eugene Weekly still functioning online and the outpouring of love from readers.

And no wonder, the Weekly is always positive and covering what others might not. My favorite part is the letters, where opinions are expressed and sometimes debated. The scourges of poverty, hunger and homelessness, have made these pages, as has the expanded Child Tax Credit that cut child poverty nearly in half before Congress failed to renew it.

Right now Congress is considering a bipartisan tax bill that would lift 500,000 children out of poverty while renewing some business tax credit. This initiative is more likely to pass if our members of Congress hear from us. Make the call, 202-224-3121, and ask your representative to vote for this bipartisan legislation that will make a difference for children.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington**

<https://eugeneweekly.com/2024/02/01/uo-workers-shelters-for-the-unhoused-the-ems-and-more-in-letters/>



Voices can turn the tide to end hunger

February 13, 2024

Exciting news for 400,000 children who will be lifted out of poverty if the tax bill passed by the House passes the Senate.

This is the movement on expanding the Child Tax Credit that was called for by citizens across the country ("What a great way to start the New Year," Willie Dickerson, Jan. 2 edition of this paper). Taking a minute to thank your representatives and encouraging your senators to help pass this bill will continue to make a difference (202-224-3121).

It matters to millions struggling with poverty in our country. Our voices can turn the tide to end hunger and homelessness.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington**

https://gazettetimes.com/opinion/letters/letter-voices-can-turn-the-tide-to-end-hunger/article_46e6da0b-3821-52c3-ba89-56867d1cea80.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Reprinted in:



https://democratherald.com/opinion/letters/letter-voices-can-turn-the-tide-to-end-hunger/article_1e7ba562-c792-11ee-9306-bf161e0a3cc9.html



Lift People Out of Poverty

March 14, 2024

My letter from a month ago called for Congress to pass the bipartisan tax bill that included an increase in the child tax credit ("Pro-EW, Pro Child Tax Credit," 2/1). No doubt many of us called our representatives to tell them to pass this poverty battling initiative: the House overwhelmingly passed it with majorities of both parties voting for it. Now it is the Senate's turn. The number is the same, 202-224-3121, to call your senators to pass this critical legislation. Half a million children lifted out of poverty and 16 million people will be more likely to avoid hunger and homelessness.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington**

<https://eugeneweekly.com/2024/03/14/readers-weigh-in-on-the-ems-the-ballet-and-more-in-this-weeks-letters/>

Pennsylvania media

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

People who give hope when poverty rises

By Karen Dolan

January 1, 2024

It's been a difficult few years for poor people in this country. Just a year after the pandemic era safety net expansion saw poverty fall to its lowest level on record, we saw a historic 60% increase as those programs expired.

Women and children have been among the hardest hit. In 2022, the last year we have data for, at least 32 million women and children were living in poverty.

Despite that hardship, I feel some hope.

Strong and resilient

That's because I've spent the last few years working with poor and low-income people — mostly single moms — impacted by systemic poverty. Through helping them tell their stories, I've learned that they're some of the strongest — and most resilient — members of our society.

Take Amy Adams from rural Kentucky. She has two associate degrees. Yet with a dearth of child care options, no public transit, and wages too low to afford even a second bedroom, her daily challenges are astounding. She walks to and from work late at night, depends on family for child care, and somehow fits her family of four into a small one-bedroom apartment.

Despite these challenges, Amy still gives her time as a member of a non-profit advocacy board to help other struggling mothers fight for policies that will improve their lives.

Or Joyce Kendrick. Joyce grew up in a middle-income family but suffered abuse as a child that led to lifelong physical and mental health challenges. The increase in food benefits and cash assistance during the pandemic briefly lifted her out of poverty. But when Congress failed to renew those critical supports, she fell right back in.

Yet even as she struggles to make ends meet, Joyce co-leads an Ohio chapter of the Poor People's Campaign, a national coalition of poor and low-income people working together for more just policies.

Poverty is a policy choice

Growing up poor and escaping an abusive partner later in life, Trish Brown has benefited from safety net support not only to take care of her family, but also her community. She volunteers as a coordinating committee member of the Poor People's Campaign in Florida and gives back as the founder and director of Power Up People in Tallahassee.

Wisconsin mom Kali Daugherty's family was transformed by the expanded Child Tax Credit included in the American Rescue Plan, which cut child poverty by half nationally. With that help, she was able to return to school, get her child new clothes, and take her to a water park for the first time.

Kazmyn Ramos learned through generational poverty how key housing is to well-being. Believing that "housing should be seen as a human right and a community builder, not a wealth builder," she founded the affordable housing non-profit Seeking 1610.

My organization, the Institute for Policy Studies, partnered with the Poor People's Campaign to study the increase in suffering since the expiration of the pandemic era supports that helped these women keep their families' heads above water.

Alongside increases in poverty, we found increases in food and housing insecurity, the loss of critical health care, and declines in life expectancy — even as billionaire wealth nationally grew by \$2 billion a day between 2020 and 2022. It's clearer than ever that poverty is a policy choice.

Different choices

But that means we can choose differently. Amy, Joyce, Trish, Kali, and Kazmyn are just a few of the millions of poor and low-income women leading the way against these systemic policy failures that impact all of us. We need to join them and demand our nation make the investments to end structural poverty.

We know what works. Collectively, we have a voice powerful enough to make it happen.

Karen Dolan directs the Criminalization of Race and Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies.

Altoona Mirror

Child Tax Credit should be renewed

January 19, 2024

It seems obvious that no child in America should go hungry and the new summer EBT Program reaching 21 million children is a good start to that goal. ("USDA says 21 million kids will receive summer food benefits" by Kenya Hunter, Altoona Mirror, Jan. 11, 2024).

At the same time, why not renew the expanded Child Tax Credit that cut child poverty nearly in half. That would be another great step toward ending child hunger in the world's richest nation.

With Congress currently working on a tax bill, if we ask our representatives to take this action, that could include this ladder out of poverty.

With child hunger and despair rising, we can't afford not to take this action.

Remember our country's future depends on the children.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.**

<https://www.altoonamirror.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/01/child-tax-credit-should-be-renewed/>

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WIC changes childrens' lives, but not every life it could change

By Candace Baker

February 5, 2024

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

That's life?

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities, and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so that she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

And let me tell you — WIC was a game-changer. And families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It

helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

Just a little help

I also was able to get the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help with our food needs. And because of these programs, I was able to go back to school, get my high school diploma, enroll in college, and graduate Magna Cum Laude.

I was even able to become a volunteer mentor with a federally funded program called Second Chance to help people who served prison time reenter society in a healthy, productive way.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance.

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications, and negative impacts on their health and well-being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

Fund the program

I now have four children. All four benefited greatly from the WIC program, just as all who are eligible deserve to do. I believe in everything WIC does — I even took a job there helping with breastfeeding support.

I'm also an Expert on Poverty at the anti-poverty organization RESULTS. These opportunities allow me to advocate for the programs that supported me when I was in need.

Congress must do the same. It must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is a mother and expert on poverty at RESULTS from Indianapolis, Indiana.

<https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2024/02/05/wic-funding-poverty-pregnant-newborns-nutrition/stories/202402050007>

Reprinted in:



<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2024/02/congress-must-ensure-millions-of-children-dont-face-hunger-in-america-opinion.html>

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Having a baby in America should be easier

By Lindsay K. Saunders

February 15, 2023

I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up. My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

Stress and trauma

While I was on unpaid maternity leave that cost us our health benefits, my husband was let go from his job. Already reliant on WIC — the federal food aid program for women, infants, and children — we were forced to go to food pantries, apply for Medicaid, and referred to a diaper bank. We were in survival mode: exhausted, stressed out, and worried.

Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. Now the monthly cost is almost twice our mortgage. In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27 other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

And crises

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation, and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind.

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends.

I work so hard to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want, and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning, or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

What families need

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support over 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the Child Tax Credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly Child Tax Credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40% before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

Lindsay K. Saunders is a North Carolina mother and advocate for RESULTS Educational Fund.

<https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2024/02/15/children-baby-birth-america-cost/stories/202402150070>

South Carolina media



Part of the McClatchy Media Network

Fully Fund SNAP

March 10, 2024

Congress is attempting to undermine choice in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to fund the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

The recent proposal to hold the WIC funding hostage to pilot a program to limit the food choices of SNAP recipients is unjust and fundamentally undermines freedom for adults to make decisions for themselves.

Food insecurity is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive solution.

SNAP and WIC play crucial roles in ensuring that low-income families have access to nutritious foods, yet Congress seems intent on eroding these vital programs with political posturing and holding programs captive to further their narrow minded, uninformed agenda.

By attempting to dictate what foods SNAP recipients can purchase, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are infringing on individual autonomy and failing to address the root causes of food insecurity and poor nutrition by failing to address the systemic issues we face.

The lack of adequate funding for SNAP and WIC exacerbates the problem making it difficult for recipients to afford healthy foods and formulas.

This neglect perpetuates a cycle of poverty and poor health that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable.

These efforts work to impose punitive measures that will further marginalize members of our community.

Congressmen and women from North and South Carolina must prioritize the well-being of all Carolinians by fully funding SNAP, attacking the root causes for food

insecurity and supporting programs like WIC that provide vital nutrition assistance to women, infants, and children.

– **Yolanda M. Gordon, Fort Mill**

<https://www.thestate.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article286443065.html>

the Sumter ITEM

Senators blocking tax cut for families for political gain

March 27, 2024

How long must families wait? It's been nearly two months since the House has passed a bipartisan expansion of the Child Tax Credit and sent it to the Senate. Estimates are that this bill will benefit 16 million children in families with low incomes, including 5.8 million kids under the age of six.

You would think that in an election year, Congress would be eager to pass a tax cut for families (and small businesses). But a few senators are blocking it for political gain. Families should not have to wait months for Congress to pass something that is both popular and necessary.

It is time for senators to show us their hands. If the bill passes, families win. If it fails, senators can explain to voters why they chose to keep children in poverty.

When the Senate returns to Washington after Easter, I urge our senators to demand an immediate vote and then vote YES on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

— **Kathy Bradley, Lugoff**

<https://www.theitem.com/stories/senators-blocking-tax-cut-for-families-for-political-gain,413500?>

Texas media

A billionaire gambler gave Abbott \$6 million. It's time for Texans to reclaim their democracy.

By Claudia Morgan and Sam Daley-Harris

January 19, 2024

A Pennsylvania billionaire gave Gov. Greg Abbott \$6 million last month in the single largest donation in Texas political history, money the governor promises to employ in his reprisals against reasonable Republicans.

Texans must take their government back from the oligarchs who are showering our leaders with millions, and there's a manual on how to do it.

Abbott's new donor is Jeff Yass, a former professional gambler and co-founder of Susquehanna International Group, an investment firm specializing in options trading, another form of gambling. He is the 52nd wealthiest man in the world, worth \$28.9 billion, according to Forbes, and he's obsessed with destroying public schools.

Abbott could not be prouder.

"With this substantial financial backing, Governor Abbott will ensure that the conservative candidates who support his bold agenda to expand school choice, secure our southern border, and lower property taxes have what they need to keep Texas red," a campaign statement declared.

Yass is the Tim Dunn of Pennsylvania, a reclusive libertarian billionaire who uses loose campaign finance laws and secretive political action committees to drive his ideological agenda. Like Dunn, who recently pocketed billions more by selling his West Texas oil and gas company, he's not afraid to back the most extreme right wing characters.

Yass handed out \$18 million to his favored candidates in Pennsylvania's 2022 primary elections and is a heavy donor to the ultraconservative State Policy Network. The local chapter is the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a right wing group that strikes fear in every Republican politician.

Investigative journalism outfit ProPublica took a deep dive into how Yass has avoided paying \$1 billion in taxes. Meanwhile, he called the COVID-19 pandemic a boon for his bottom line and invests in gambling websites that exploit addiction.

Abbott, who is not up for reelection this year, will spend some of the money to defeat rural Republicans who voted against his plan to provide taxpayer-funded private school vouchers and gut public school funding. Rural lawmakers recognize that public schools are the largest employers in their districts, which do not have private schools.

Yass' gift doubles Dunn's \$3 million contribution to Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's campaign coffers through his Defend Texas Liberty PAC. Just as Patrick delivered an acquittal for Dunn's handpicked attorney general, Ken Paxton, Yass hopes Abbott can deliver on school vouchers despite polls showing most Texans oppose them.

Such massive donations, extremist rhetoric and one-party rule have left most Texas voters disillusioned. A new Pew Research survey shows extreme partisanship is souring all Americans on our democracy.

"I feel like if I could get my voice out there more, I would be more involved," one Republican-leaning woman told Pew. "I'm not one of the important people, you know what I mean?"

Sam Daley-Harris knows precisely how she feels, which is why he's thoroughly updated his book, "Reclaiming Our Democracy." The book provides a detailed guide to nonpartisan engagement with politicians of every stripe to demand they meet the needs of the people, not their billionaire donors.

Daley-Harris' experience founding RESULTS, an anti-poverty nonprofit, in 1985 informs his tactics. The group trains volunteers to contact their elected officials, get appointments with them or their staff and make the case for common sense solutions.

RESULTS is good at alerting the media, too. Readers should know the Houston chapter gave me an award last year for my commentary on poverty and health issues.

Citizens are shocked to learn how responsive elected officials can be, especially if you offer an intelligent pitch instead of cursing at them. Politicians and journalists are swamped with emails and messages from professional communicators daily, and we don't hear enough from regular folks who sincerely desire to better their community.

“The book aims to show people that when it comes to protecting our democracy, more is possible than just voting, as important as that is, or standing by and watching in horror,” Daley-Harris told me.

I sense that every person who tells me they hate politics and politicians is hungry for change. We can see it in the polls showing how much we disapprove of our leaders. We live it through low-turnout elections. Only 16% of Houston voters cast ballots in the mayoral runoff.

This year, we need angry and disillusioned citizens to speak up because, I promise you, that’s what the extremists and billionaires on all sides fear the most. A popular revolt by the center would take away their partisan power and replace it with the practically-minded democracy we all want.

<https://link.houstonchronicle.com/view/5d2a1d76fc942d07dc18969ek9v2r.zp/30c8d7ba>

The Dallas Morning News

Listen to Results

February 2, 2024

Texans must recognize their power as voters. Congress is accountable to us, the taxpayers, so we should advocate for change. Antipathy and apathy threaten our democracy, but we can overcome them.

Nonpartisan organizations like Results provide a platform for individuals to use their voices to influence political decisions. Results has local chapters in Dallas and Fort Worth, offering opportunities to engage and make a difference.

I encourage readers to join organizations like Results, research candidates and demand honesty and humility from our elected officials. Let's reclaim our democracy and shape the future of our great state Texas and the country.

— **Bukekile Dube, McKinney**

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/02/02/letters-to-the-editor-david-casstevens-immigration-ken-paxton-voting-texans-cowboys/>

The Dallas Morning News

Be a voter and an advocate

February 4, 2024

Re: “How We Can Reclaim Our Democracy — We have to be more discerning voters. Our Voter Guide can help you make a decision,” Wednesday editorial.

Apollo Astronaut Rusty Schweickart said: “We aren’t passengers on Spaceship Earth, we’re the crew. We aren’t residents on this planet, we’re citizens. The difference in both cases is responsibility.”

This editorial about voting and being informed is hugely important. But what about all the time between elections the days, weeks, and months afterward?

I recently read Sam Daley-Harris’ book, *Reclaiming Our Democracy*, and listened to Kris Boyd’s Think interview of Daley-Harris, “Why signing that online petition isn’t enough.” Daley-Harris founded the anti-poverty lobby Results in 1980 and Civic Courage in 2012.

Almost 15 years ago, a group of very ordinary Dallas folks joined Results and learned how to advocate effectively with our elected officials. Since then we have had members of Congress take 217 actions by meeting with them or their staff 252 times, generating 174 pieces of published media and holding 76 community events. It has been a transformational experience and not something I ever thought I could do.

So in addition to becoming a discerning voter, why not become an advocate? It would be a powerful way to make a difference while strengthening our democracy in the process.

— **Margaret Smith, Dallas/Turtle Creek**

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/02/04/letters-to-the-editor-border-deal-pam-little-houti-attacks-medical-insurance-results/>

The Dallas Morning News

Back expanded child tax credit

March 17, 2024

Re: "Child tax credit debate is just the beginning," Monday news story.

This story concerning the child tax credit debate explains the upcoming opportunities that Congress has to greatly reduce childhood poverty in our country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress approved a temporary child tax credit which lifted about 16 million children out of poverty.

The use of these funds was closely monitored, and it was found that they were used for the purposes intended. However, it then lapsed. At present an expansion of the child tax credit has been passed by the House, and it awaits passage in the Senate, but to this point no vote has been taken, and our Texas senators have not indicated how they plan to vote.

A false objection has been raised concerning the need to approve it before the federal tax deadline, but as this story points out, the Treasury Department can automatically amend returns for those who are eligible and apply the child tax credit.

The affected children of this country did not choose to be in a state of poverty, and it is only with this child tax credit that millions of them can be lifted out of it. Urge Sens. John Cornyn and Ted Cruz to vote in favor of the expanded child tax credit.

— **Martin G. White, Dallas/Turtle Creek**

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/03/17/letters-to-the-editor-at-large-voting-child-tax-credit-richardson-isd-ken-paxton/>

The Dallas Morning News

Promote expanded child tax credit

March 20, 2024

The recent voter turnout in our recent Texas primaries is disheartening. I think most of us often overlook the power of our collective voice, especially in shaping policies that directly impact our lives like the child tax credit.

During the pandemic, a temporary child tax credit boost helped millions, demonstrating its effectiveness. Now, with the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, we have a chance to make that impact lasting. This bill could significantly reduce childhood poverty across the nation, but it is currently stalled in the Senate. Yet, our senators remain silent and haven't shown where they stand.

Like the primaries, its fate hinges on our engagement and willingness to speak up. Our low primary turnout should challenge and motivate us to be better. We have an opportunity to demonstrate that Texans do care deeply about their communities and the legacy we leave for our children.

I urge you all to not only become a more active voter but to also become an advocate. Please contact Sens. John Cornyn and Ted Cruz of Texas to vote in favor of the expanded child tax credit. Democracy matters, and I know that together, we can make a difference!

— **Siddarth Vyas, Dallas**

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/03/20/letters-to-the-editor-home-lots-primary-voting-brazilian-elections-solar-eclipse/>



Long-term changes

April 7, 2024

Regarding “How IRS Direct File could save you time and money | Opinion,” (April 3): Interesting, very interesting to read in Shannon Halbrook’s op-ed about the benefits Texas taxpayers could take advantage of if they use the free IRS Direct File pilot program. The hope is that the program will expand in coming years so that (in part) many more low-income families who do not file income tax but who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit will use the program.

My hope is that Congress will move on the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act. And more specifically, I hope the Senate Finance Committee, where the bill appears stalled, will expand the Child Tax Credit for the next three years. Texas Senior Sen. John Cornyn sits on this committee and can be reached at 202-224-2934.

— **Kathleen Duncan, La Porte, RESULTS volunteer**

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/letters/article/whitmire-mayor-water-bill-utilities-public-works-19388063.php>

Utah media

The Salt Lake Tribune

Child tax credit actually saves money. Romney and Lee should support the bill that expands it.

February 25, 2024

I am surprised to hear that Sen. Mitt Romney is unsure about supporting a tax bill that will strengthen Utah's families and economy. Especially since our entire U.S. House delegation did. So thanks go out to Reps. John Curtis, Blake Moore, Burgess Owens and Celeste Maloy.

The bill currently under consideration in the Senate includes tax breaks for business research and development and also expands the child tax credit (CTC), such that, for instance, the credit will be provided on a per-child basis, helping to stabilize our young families.

Sen. Romney specifically cited CTC costs as his concern. But the CTC actually saves money. Here's why:

When little kids don't get enough nutrition, their brains can be damaged, hampering their ability to learn throughout life. This harms the child's ability to fulfill their potential, while the rest of us miss out on their unrealized contributions as well. Instead, these kids are more likely to drop out of school and turn to crime. And that costs all of us a lot of money in the form of lost goods, plus greater expenses for police, courts and prisons. It's cheaper to just feed kids in the first place. It's more humane to make sure that little children have adequate nutrition, too.

So I urge Sen. Mitt Romney and Sen. Mike Lee to vote "Yes" on this important economy-boosting and family-stabilizing tax bill when it comes before the Senate.

— **Georgia Platts, South Jordan**

<https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/letters/2024/02/25/letter-child-tax-credit-actually/>

Washington state media

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

Cutting child poverty would help fulfill the dream

January 23, 2024

To the editor — Kudos to the Herald-Republic's thoughtful Jan. 14 editorial on Dr. King's dream and our part in helping it come true ("This weekend, remember you can't kill a dream").

Going beyond gestures to elect representatives and leaders who will work to put America on the road to equity is an important step. Battling the scourges of poverty including hunger, homelessness and lack of decent health care is important. The current bipartisan tax bill in Congress would begin to expand the child tax credit that originally cut child poverty nearly in half, would be a good start.

Those who represent us in Congress need to hear from us that this initiative needs to pass. A call or email would take a few minutes and make a difference. We need to take action to make Dr. King's dream come true.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish**

https://www.yakimaherald.com/opinion/letter-cutting-child-poverty-would-help-fulfill-the-dream/article_20c72d5e-b712-11ee-95a8-079e30c5bf35.html

Kitsap Sun

Kudos to Congress for looking out for kids

February 4, 2024

So good of the Kitsap Sun to publish the story "How much is the child tax credit for 2023? Here's what you need to know about qualifying."

This tax tool has lifted as much as half of American children out of poverty during the COVID pandemic. Refreshingly, the U.S. House of Representatives passed bi-partisan legislation that will fund this supportive credit through 2025.

It expands the Child Tax Credit so that eligible families with low income will receive the same full CTC that wealthy families already get. Estimates are that the CTC changes will benefit 16 million children and lift 400,000 children from poverty in the first year alone.

How hopeful it is to see Democrats and Republicans start a contentious election year by coming together to help kids. It is true that this expansion is only a fraction of the 2021 CTC expansion that cut child poverty by 40 percent. And giving the CTC to all low-income children must remain our goal. But in a contentious, divided Congress, this is meaningful progress.

We must not waste this valuable opportunity to reduce child poverty. Kudos to our Senators Cantwell, Murray and Rep. Kilmer for their support for this Child Tax Credit expansion. Readers who have residency in states other than Washington should call their Senators hone the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to request their support of this important and effective tax bill.

— **Diana Tyree-Eddy, Hansville**

No online link

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

Yes, your vote — and your voice — matters

March 6, 2024

To the editor — Sandra Holden Montag is right to say “your vote matters.” (‘If you want to preserve your choices, vote,’ by Sandra Holden Montag, Yakima Herald-Republic, Feb. 1.) So does your voice. Right now you can ask Sens. Murray and Cantwell to push the current tax bill expanding the child tax credit. Not a hard sell since they both support it. But the more folks they hear from, the more evidence they have to convince their colleagues.

It matters to the 500,000 children who will be lifted out of poverty. It matters to the 16 million Americans who will make use of this ladder out of poverty.

Votes and voices, the best way to make a difference.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish**

https://www.yakimaherald.com/opinion/letter-yes-your-vote-and-your-voice-matters/article_1af67d9e-d8cd-11ee-9429-8fed2b1a81e1.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

The Columbian

Congress should act on housing

March 15, 2024

Thanks for putting a face on the housing struggle millions of Americans face today (“Housed, but hanging on by thread,” The Columbian, March 2). Monica Zazueta’s battle to stay housed is a reminder of the need for Congress to take action.

Recently the House did pass the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act with an overwhelming bipartisan vote that included an increase to the Child Tax Credit, which would lift a half-million children out of poverty and benefit 16 million children in families that otherwise wouldn’t receive the full credit. Now on to the Senate, where it is sadly stalled.

A renter tax credit that hasn’t made headway would help people in or near poverty no longer pay over 30 percent of their income for rent. We can bring hope by asking those who represent us to pass these and other ladders out of poverty. Our future depends on our children and they are depending on us to push Congress to action.

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish**

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2024/mar/15/letter-congress-should-act-on-housing/>

Letter to the editor

March 20, 2024

Editor,

The modern pace of life makes it seem like there is no time to reach out to make a difference, but there is always five minutes to speak up for children. Imagine America having the highest poverty rates among the rich countries in our world, especially since we are the richest. Millions of children in our country are facing hunger, homelessness and lack of quality health care.

Right now the U.S. Senate seems too busy to take action on the House bill that would lift half a million children out of poverty, while giving a hand up to 16 million more. But if we raise our voices, calling on Senators [Patty] Murray and [Maria] Cantwell to speak to leadership to get the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act passed, we can make a difference. Both of our senators support this action, but hearing from us reminds them how important this is. A call to them, (202) 224-3121, can help move this bill and create a better future for millions of children.

– **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish**

<https://www.cascadiadaily.com/2024/mar/19/letters-to-the-editor-week-of-march-20-2024/>

West Virginia media

CTC can help end child hunger

By Josephine Reece

March 2, 2024

According to Hunger Free WV, one in nine West Virginians go hungry every day, and one in seven children in our state are dealing with food insecurity.

As a pediatrician working in West Virginia and globally in sub-Saharan Africa, I see how hunger impacts children and families. In children, we know that hunger can lead to stunted growth, developmental delays, hyperactivity, anxiety and aggression, but it also puts them at risk for chronic diseases such as anemia and asthma. And these risks are not just related to longstanding hunger — we see these conditions develop even in kids who experience multiple brief episodes of food insecurity.

Hunger is heartbreaking for a number of reasons — not the least of which is that we have the means to do better. One proven solution to alleviate hunger, especially among children, is through an expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC). A previous expansion of the CTC in 2021 was extremely effective in addressing hunger.

An overwhelming majority of families with low incomes reported using the expanded benefit during that time to meet basic needs, such as paying the rent and purchasing groceries. According to the Food Research and Action Center, the 2021 CTC expansion resulted in a 26% drop in food insufficiency nationwide. But when this expansion lapsed at the end of that year, these gains evaporated.

Thankfully, a renewed CTC expansion is included in the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act that passed in the House of Representatives with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in late January. The current proposed CTC expansions are not as extensive as those in 2021, but if enacted into law now, it is estimated that families making less than \$60,000 could see their CTC increase an average of \$900 per year. This is a significant increase that will make it easier for millions of parents across the country and right here in West Virginia to care for their families and make sure their kids won't go hungry.

Contrary to false claims, the CTC expansion in the tax bill does not increase unemployment, does not add to the deficit and does not give new benefits to undocumented immigrants.

What this bill does is grant a pathway for more families with low incomes, including those with multiple children, to access the full amount of the credit. It is estimated that the families of 16 million children nationwide would see some increase in their benefit, and the families of 500,000 more children would have the tools to lift themselves above the poverty line.

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, U.S. Rep. Carol Miller (R-W.Va.) was a key supporter in advancing Child Tax Credit expansions in the tax bill. Rep. Alex Mooney (R-W.Va.) joined her in voting in favor of this legislation just weeks ago. But now, this measure is waiting for the Senate to take action before families facing hunger will be able to take advantage of the CTC expansion when they file their taxes this spring.

This bill is a good step in improving the lives of children and families experiencing hunger. Sens. Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin should support the passage of the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act now to relieve food insecurity for children and families in West Virginia.

Josephine Reece, MD, is a founding member of the West Virginia chapter of RESULTS, a grassroots, non-partisan antipoverty movement that focuses on domestic and global policies to end poverty, which is the greatest social determinant of health. A native West Virginian and WVU alum, she splits her time as a pediatrician and internist practicing here at home in West Virginia and globally in resource-limited countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa.

<https://www.dominionpost.com/2024/03/02/guest-essay-ctc-can-help-end-child-hunger/>



Families need tax relief

March 21, 2024

Spring is a wonderful season of renewal, and it's also full of excitement for my family as we confirm our summer vacation plans. Over the years, this has included many wonderful trips both within our state and beyond.

As grateful as we are for these special moments, I have lately noticed that something as simple as a short family vacation is getting further out of reach for many families. It's not only that the price of rentals has increased, but the cost of about everything else has, too. When you're trying to raise a family, that limits options for any annual summer getaway.

Congress can help parents across the country by passing the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, which includes much needed expansions of the Child Tax Credit (CTC). If enacted into law, it is estimated that families making less than \$60,000 could see their CTC increase an average of \$900 per year. This bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the House back in January, but now it's stalled in the Senate.

When families can't afford food or housing, a nice vacation is out of the question. With so many incredible opportunities for outdoor recreation in North Central West Virginia, this impacts the local economy.

I thank Rep. Alex Mooney for his support of the tax package and urge Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito to do the same and see that this gets a vote in the upper chamber as soon as possible.

— Joanna DiStefano, Morgantown

https://www.wvnews.com/theet/opinion/letterstoeditor/families-need-tax-relief/article_e60f6bc6-e7f5-11ee-b6fc-7f2e6a5efb05.html

Capito, Manchin must support CTC bill

March 31, 2024

Rep. Alex Mooney was part of the overwhelming bipartisan majority voting in favor of the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act that passed in the House of Representatives in late January. This tax bill expands the Child Tax Credit (CTC) for families with low income and is a good step in improving the lives of children experiencing poverty.

If enacted into law, it is estimated that families making less than \$60,000 could see their CTC increase an average of \$900 per year. This will make it easier for millions of parents across the country and right here in West Virginia to pay the rent and put food on the table.

I know this to be true because I am one of these families. Just last year my husband, my kids and I were homeless, living in a 10-man tent, not being able to stay afloat, paying for food, clothes, bills or rent. The CTC will provide stability and peace of mind to my family and many others.

The expansion does not increase unemployment, does not add to the deficit and does not give new benefits to undocumented immigrants, despite false claims to the contrary.

We can all agree that it's a good thing when Democrats and Republicans come together to help kids get the best start in life. Sens. Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin should follow Rep. Mooney's lead and support the passage of the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act now.

— **Christiana Stalnaker, RESULTS WV Volunteer Advocate, Four States, Marion County**

<https://www.dominionpost.com/2024/03/30/march-31-letters-to-the-editor/>

National media



Feel-good policies

January 2024

Thanks for the inspirations stories of members making a difference by helping others ["Be the change," December 2023]. We can each do something – smile at others, take a moment to help in simple ways, talk to your members of Congress to encourage legislation that you believe will make a difference. Using our voices can make a difference.

– **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Washington**

https://www.costcoconnection.com/january_2024/page2.html

SCHEERPOST

In the World's Wealthiest Country, Housing Should Be a Human Right and a Community Builder

The focus on zoning, commerce, and profit-maximization does a disservice to the rich sense of community affordable housing can create.

By Kazmyn Ramos / OtherWords

January 2, 2024

Too many of us have to depend on sheer good luck to make it — especially when it comes to putting a roof over our heads.

We grow up hearing that hard work alone will lift us above the hardships we're born into. But many of us also watched as our parents worked two and three jobs, relied on extended family to watch us, and still struggled to afford stable housing. Far too many of us are living that same struggle ourselves.

It's not that we aren't resourceful. My grandmother, who barely scraped by with factory work and countless odd jobs, pulled together with neighbors who supported each other through a mutual aid network. Thanks to her resourcefulness, our community, and luck, we had someplace to call home. That gave my mother the chance to become the first one in our family to go to college. I followed in her footsteps to attend graduate school.

We made it work. But I've learned through generational poverty that the lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest obstacles to thriving. I learned even more through my work with Healthy Families, a national, research-backed program.

I conducted home visits with low-income mothers, addressing maternal health, birth outcomes, and child development. Their poverty was different from what I grew up with. Many of these mothers were immigrants with language barriers and no access to the extended networks, mutual aid, or stable housing that I had.

Evictions were rampant. I saw conditions that you wouldn't believe existed in the richest country in the world.

I'm a strong believer in mutual aid. But in the world's wealthiest nation, should we really have to rely solely on working people sharing their meager resources among themselves? To eradicate poverty and housing instability, we're going to need more than that.

Nationally, a worker would need an hourly wage of at least \$28.58 to afford a modest two-bedroom rental — or nearly \$24 an hour for just one bedroom. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Almost half of low-income renters spend over 30 percent of their incomes on housing alone.

Building on my mother and grandmother's work in mutual aid, I've found community engagement to be invaluable — not only to connect families to housing, but also to organize our collective voices to push lawmakers toward solutions.

Solutions like building more affordable housing, more public housing, and more housing in general. Guaranteeing workers a living wage for their hard work. Making sure we have a strong social safety net so families can survive lean times.

Unfortunately, housing policy often takes human rights and the need for community out of the policy process. It focuses on zoning, commerce, profit-maximization, and "protecting" wealthy communities from low-income neighbors. This does a disservice to the rich sense of community affordable housing can create.

Housing should be seen as a human right and a community builder, not a wealth builder. It should be a way to lift us all up rather than segregate us and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

The more we separate ourselves from our fellow humans, the more damage we do to all of us as a society. My mother and grandmother taught me that. I bet yours did too. So let's work together to make the dream of housing for all a reality.

Kazmyn Ramos is a Program Manager for an NGO that delivers cash to people in poverty, founder of the affordable housing nonprofit Seeking 1610, and a Poverty Expert at RESULTS. She lives in Indianapolis. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://scheerpost.com/2024/01/02/in-the-worlds-wealthiest-country-housing-should-be-a-human-right-and-a-community-builder/>

Reprinted in:



<https://popularresistance.org/in-the-worlds-wealthiest-country-housing-should-be-a-human-right/>

The Child Tax Credit Changed My Life. Lawmakers Have a Chance to Bring It Back.

Poverty is a policy choice by lawmakers with warped priorities. Now they have a chance to choose better, if only modestly.

January 17, 2024

By Clara Moore

From childhood on, I've spent my life haunted by the ghost of poverty.

A myth exists in America that financial well-being follows if we just work hard and make good choices. But it's not that simple. At some point, most of us face unforeseen obstacles — from physical or mental health challenges to lost jobs, economic downturns, and natural disasters.

Along with low wages and other structural causes of poverty, that puts financial well-being out of reach for about 140 million people in this country, the Poor People's Campaign estimates.

The reality of poverty isn't even close to the stereotype propagated by politicians who want only to fund the military and subsidize the rich while cutting everything else. This isn't a lifestyle one chooses by being lazy and getting fat off some mythical government largesse.

For many of us, poverty means working multiple low-wage jobs and still being short on rent, child care, food, or the energy bill. Poverty means you don't have stable transportation and live in fear of anyone in your family needing health care.

It means your children go without good winter boots or new clothes because you need the lights to stay on. It means there's no time or money for anything beyond the scrape of daily life — no waterparks, no road trips, no relief.

People don't choose this lifestyle. It's created by policymakers who prioritize corporate profit and bloated military spending over investing in families in this country. Yet they expect poor people to be the ones who feel ashamed.

At one point I was living the American Dream. I'd been a successful chef, even bought a house at 23. But the 2008 collapse flipped my mortgage upside down, and the single investment I'd been able to make for my future crumbled.

A few years later, after the birth of my child, I was cast back into the same poverty I'd grown up with. Programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC — the program to support women, infants, and children — kept our heads above water while I returned to university to complete an unfinished Bachelor's degree. But our heads dipped under a few times. It was exhausting.

By the time I'd completed a graduate program and we'd eked out some stability, the pandemic hit. But this time, the help was different.

The expanded and enhanced Child Tax Credit in President Biden's American Rescue Plan not only helped me pay my rent and monthly bills — it helped me be a better mom. Relieved of some financial anxiety, I could spend more time with my daughter and commit to the post-graduate job search, ultimately getting the good job that I have today.

Now I'm financially stable for the first time in my life. But tens of millions of others won't get that same chance unless lawmakers act. Congress let the expanded Child Tax Credit expire at the end of 2021, even though it had cut child poverty in half. Subsequently, child poverty immediately skyrocketed — a disaster.

But now, Congress again has a chance to expand the Child Tax Credit in a tax package that may pass soon. Frustratingly, the package gives more tax breaks to corporations that already pay little to no taxes, even as it modestly expands the Child Tax Credit again — although by less than before — and improves the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the new credit would lift 400,000 children out of poverty, make 3 million children less poor, and help a substantial number of the remaining 19 million poor children currently excluded from the full benefit.

It's necessary, but not enough — too much money in the bill goes to corporations that don't need it. Again, investment priorities are skewed in favor of the wealthy and corporations.

It's only when we prioritize the well-being of families that we will see families thrive.

Clara Moore is a researcher and mom who lives in Newark, New Jersey. She shares her experiences in poverty as an advocate with RESULTS Educational Fund. All opinions expressed are her own and do not represent her employer. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

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Lawmakers Must Fully Fund the WIC Program

Half of all babies — including mine — rely on this essential program. But unless Congress acts, millions could face food insecurity.

By Candace Baker

January 31, 2024

When my grandmother was raising my cousins and me, she taught us to work hard and go after what we wanted. I didn't know it at the time, but we were in poverty.

Scared of judgment and bureaucracy, my grandmother refused to apply for assistance programs. But that meant she had to work several jobs, day and night, bringing us with her because she couldn't afford child care. We barely got by — and enjoyed no time together outside of work and school.

We thought that's how everyone lived. Your grandma works around the clock and still can't make ends meet. That's life, right? But as I got older, I saw that other kids had new clothes, after-school activities, and time to play.

I wanted that. And most of all, I wanted to help my grandmother so that she could have it too. So I vowed to get a college education and a good-paying job helping others.

If I wanted to achieve my dream of helping my family, I knew I'd have to do something different. I'd heard about a program that helped pregnant and postpartum moms and their babies, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

I almost didn't apply because when I tried to enroll in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I ran into the same judgment and bureaucratic stumbling blocks my grandmother feared. But I knew I needed help — and so did my baby.

And let me tell you — WIC was a game-changer!

WIC not only provides nutritious foods but also nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and even health care referrals for low-income mothers and small children. It helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improves health outcomes so children have the best chance at a healthy and productive life.

I also was able to get the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help with our food needs. And because of these programs, I was able to go back to school, get my high school diploma, enroll in college, and graduate Magna Cum Laude. I was even able to become a volunteer mentor with a federally funded program called Second Chance to help people who served prison time reenter society in a healthy, productive way.

Families like mine are everywhere — about half of all babies born in the United States benefit from WIC.

It turns out that most of us just need a little help at especially difficult times in our lives. If wages had kept pace with the rising cost of living, rent, and food, perhaps we wouldn't need assistance programs. But wages haven't kept pace with living costs in 50 years.

For the past 25 years, WIC has served every eligible family that applied for its critical services. But now it's in danger — Congress hasn't agreed to fund the program to meet the needs of all who are eligible. There's a \$1 billion shortfall, which means that 2 million pregnant and postpartum women and their little ones won't get necessary food and health assistance

Imagine all those families that will face food insecurity, childbirth complications, and negative impacts on their health and well being that can last a lifetime — even generations.

I now have four children. All four benefited greatly from the WIC program, just as all who are eligible deserve to do. I believe in everything WIC does — I even took a job there helping with breastfeeding support. I'm also an Expert on Poverty at the anti-poverty organization RESULTS. These opportunities allow me to advocate for the programs that supported me when I was in need.

I need your help to ensure that Congress does the same. We must fully fund the WIC program so that no eligible family is turned away.

Candace Baker is a mother, fierce advocate for anti-poverty programs, and Expert on Poverty at RESULTS from Indianapolis, Indiana. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

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Having a Child Shouldn't Cause Financial Catastrophe

In the wealthiest country on earth, welcoming a child should be a joy for families — not a financial trauma.

By Lindsay K. Saunders

February 14, 2024

I had a baby in 2021 and quickly learned how parenting and child care expenses add up.

My husband and I had saved up for months to afford my unpaid maternity leave — I kept working even after my water broke because we needed every penny. It was a dream come true to have a career that I was proud of and finally be welcoming a child into our lives.

But I had no idea how hard it would really be.

While I was on unpaid maternity leave that cost us our health benefits, my husband was let go from his job. Already reliant on WIC — the federal food aid program for women, infants, and children — we were forced to go to food pantries, apply for Medicaid, and referred to a diaper bank. We were in survival mode: exhausted, stressed out, and worried.

Despite a litany of postpartum complications that continue to plague me more than two years later, I ended up only taking seven weeks of leave before I returned to work out of desperation.

I wondered: Why doesn't the U.S. have a paid parental leave policy?

Instead, my first and only experience with motherhood was marred by stress and trauma. Again and again, I had to choose between my health and a paycheck, which can feel like a punishment. I'd proudly served my country on a one-year assignment overseas working on foreign aid, and it didn't matter.

We found child care at a loving, quality child care center, but the tuition kept increasing. Now the monthly cost is almost twice our mortgage. In fact, child care costs exceed college tuition where we live in North Carolina, as well as in at least 27 other states. My stomach gets in a knot every six months when I know the tuition will increase again.

I wondered: Why don't we invest more in early care and education?

Meanwhile, the crises causing outsized harm to families throughout the pandemic compounded: a diaper shortage, a formula shortage, inflation, and wages that wouldn't keep up. So many people are struggling to get back on their feet and desperately need balance and some peace of mind. The stress took its toll, and my husband and I separated in spring 2023.

I wondered: If only we'd had more support, would we have made it?

I have an advanced degree and work as a communications director at a nonprofit while also freelancing. After paying for necessities, we have nothing left, so I get food and supplies from neighbors and friends. I work so hard as a single mom to try to achieve the dreams I have for myself and my baby boy — the dreams that all mothers have. I don't want my child to deal with the stress and constant refrain of "we don't have the money for that," like I did growing up.

Families desperately need, want, and deserve better. Welcoming a child should never be the reason a family plunges into poverty, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We shouldn't be sacrificing health, quality early learning, or stability in exchange for a roof over our heads and food. Instead, we should be building strong foundations and generational wealth for our kids.

We need federally mandated paid parental and medical leave. We need additional dedicated funding for programs like WIC that support over 6 million families.

And we need to continue expanding the Child Tax Credit. In North Carolina alone, the monthly Child Tax Credits received in 2021 helped the families of 140,000 children lift themselves out of poverty. Nationally, the credit cut child poverty by over 40 percent before Congress let the pandemic expansion expire at the end of 2021.

Congress must put our tax dollars and policies toward strong support for families. Let's ensure no parent experiences welcoming a child a child as a financial catastrophe and make this country a place where families prosper.

Lindsay K. Saunders is a North Carolina mother and dedicated advocate for RESULTS Educational Fund, a national anti-poverty organization. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

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Final Push to Save Expanded Child Tax Credit as Senate Hopes Dim

The bipartisan tax package, which sailed through the House in January, is projected to benefit 16 million poor children in the first year.

By Linda Jacobson

March 26, 2024

The last time Congress increased the child tax credit — during the pandemic — Sarah Izabel used the extra cash to enroll her son in an afterschool program so she could apply to graduate school.

“If my son was home, then I would be taking care of him,” said the Stanford University student, who’s now working on a doctorate in neuroscience. “These programs really support people as they’re improving their lives.”

She was among the parents and advocates who celebrated in January when the oft-gridlocked House overwhelmingly passed a tax package that includes a new increase for the program — one that experts project would benefit roughly 16 million poor children in the first year. But the plan has hit an unexpected wall in the Senate where some Republicans are hoping to kill it.

Sarah Izabel used the pandemic-era child tax credit to send her son to an afterschool program so she could spend time on her graduate school application. (Sarah Izabel)

“The chamber we never thought we would be waiting on is the Senate,” said Ariel Taylor Smith, senior director of policy and action for the National Parents Union, one of several organizations ramping up pressure on skeptical Republicans before they return from recess April 8. She’s opposed to lawmakers revising the bill in order to appease opponents. “It will delay aid for families at a time when peanut butter costs \$8.”

If the measure doesn't pass, it could be well over a year before Congress takes up a similar proposal. That's when they'll consider renewing the Trump-era tax law, which doubled the child tax credit to \$2,000 and expires at the end of 2025. But advocates say families need "more breathing room" now as inflation continues to strain household budgets. The proposed child tax credit, which would apply to the 2023 taxes families are filing this spring, is not as expansive as one Congress passed in 2021. But experts say it would help bring down child poverty, which has jumped since the larger benefit ran out.

"I think this is the best chance we have of passing the tax package this year," said Elyssa Schmier, a vice president for government relations with MomsRising, an advocacy group. "We hear from families every day that are struggling to afford child care, medicine for their children, groceries and rent. Any way we can provide them support... in a timely manner, not only benefits moms, families and children, but the local economy as well."

The 2021 pandemic credit, which allowed families to receive up to \$3,600 per child, split into monthly payments, cut child poverty in half, Census data showed. As a parent living "paycheck to paycheck," Izabel said the monthly payments allowed her to rely less on food pantries.

But Democrats failed to get Congress to make that level of support permanent.

Senate finance Chair Ron Wyden of Oregon, a Democrat, and Rep. Jason Smith, a Missouri Republican who leads the House Ways and Means Committee, struck the current bipartisan deal. The proposal would gradually increase the refundable limit of \$1,600 per child to \$2,000 by 2025 and allow parents to get the maximum benefit for each of their children. Right now, the more children in a family, the more parents have to earn to get the full credit.

For example, a single mother of two earning \$15,000 a year receives \$1,875 under the existing 2017 rate, but under the Wyden-Smith proposal, would receive \$3,600 on her 2023 taxes and \$3,750 the following year.

But Sen. Mike Crapo of Idaho, the ranking Republican on the finance committee, strongly objects to a provision that would allow families to still earn the credit even if they work less. He thinks it turns the program into an entitlement program instead of one that rewards work. Wyden has offered to drop the provision.

Republican Sen. Mike Crapo of Idaho, right, is the leading opponent of a bipartisan tax package that would expand benefits for families. Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, left, who chairs the finance committee struck the deal with Rep. Jason Smith, a Missouri Republican. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

The bill needs 60 votes to overcome a filibuster and get to a floor vote. But experts say it's unlikely Majority Leader Chuck Schumer would advance the legislation unless he's confident it would pass. Republican Sen. Todd Young of Indiana is among those still in favor of the plan, which also includes tax incentives for businesses. But so far, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell seems to be backing Crapo's position.

"There are easily 10 Republicans who like the bill, but [it's] unclear if they will vote yes without leadership being on board," said David Plasterer, a senior associate at Results, an anti-poverty nonprofit. "The hope is that businesses and constituents will be all over Senate Republicans."

'Economic impact'

Democrats wanted to see relief for families similar to the 2021 expansion. That's why Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, who voted against the House bill, called it "a watered-down policy for the sake of making a deal."

The monthly payment provision, Plasterer said, was especially important to families with school-age children, who used the funds for basic needs like food and rent, but also spent it on child care, afterschool programs and educational materials.

But there's also an advantage to getting a bigger tax refund — especially when it comes to education, he said. The extra money can go towards buying a car, which can help alleviate some of the transportation challenges that exacerbate chronic absenteeism, particularly in rural areas, he said.

Originally from rural Indiana, where he worked with low-income fathers at a social service agency, he said the only time during the year when families had thousands of dollars available was when they received their tax refund.

"Those families are doing repairs to their car, or buying a used car," he said. "If you don't have a car, you can't get to school."

National Parents Union polls show some families, especially those with household incomes less than \$50,000, struggle to pay for basic necessities. (National Parents Union, Echelon Insights)

Polling conducted by the National Parents Union shows broad support among parents from both parties for expanding the tax credit. With the pro-business benefits in the plan, like deductions for research and development, Smith said she doesn't understand why some Republicans aren't on board.

"When you think about the economic impact of the total package," she said, "it should be a no brainer."

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— **Linda Jacobson is a senior writer at The 74.**

<https://www.the74million.org/article/final-push-to-save-expanded-child-tax-credit-as-senate-hopes-dim/>

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Rents Are Unaffordable Nationwide. A Renter's Tax Credit Would Help.

A monthly tax credit that capped housing costs at 30 percent of income could keep millions of Americans — including me — in our homes.

By Ashley Dines

April 3, 2024

I spent my first birthday in a shelter. Decades later, after doing all I was supposed to do to lift myself up out of poverty, I'm sofa hopping with my children.

I live in Las Vegas, where I work on a program helping low-income women and children find support to keep a roof over their heads and food in their bellies. When I enrolled in the program myself, the supervisors recognized my ability to lead and offered me this job.

I love my work, and the pay is solidly above minimum wage. Given my humble beginnings, anyone would say I'm a success story. Except I'm currently homeless.

Rents are astronomically high. In Las Vegas, the average household now needs to make at least \$70,000 a year to afford rent. I make a decent full-time salary — but not that much.

It's not a problem unique to me or to Vegas. According to the Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is no state or county in the United States where someone working full-time at minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

When a huge chunk of your paycheck goes to rent or the mortgage, there's little leftover for an emergency. And most Americans — 56 percent of us — can't pay for an unexpected emergency of \$1,000. A surprise dental bill, medical bill, or car repair can send us spiraling into poverty.

That's what happened to me. My mother had to be hospitalized, I separated from my children's father, and my car broke down. I lost everything — almost literally overnight.

I first had to help my mother. She was my childcare provider, but she's now disabled. Then my cell phone bill payments lapsed for two months, and I had to pay in full to keep my only source of communication turned on. I had to fix my car to get to work and get the kids where they needed to go. Legal bills piled up from trying to secure custody and child support.

I quickly fell behind on rent. The next thing I know, the constable was at my door — forcing me, my two kids, and my disabled mother out of the apartment and down the stairs. That proved too challenging for my mother, and I had to take her back to the hospital immediately.

Again, I work full time and make decent money. But many people are like me — we fall into the gap where our income is too high for assistance but too low for living.

Often, just a little bit of help could keep us from falling into homelessness, joblessness, or worse. If rental assistance were expanded to people making less than a housing wage, or if the pandemic-era expanded Child Tax Credit were still in place, I wouldn't have been evicted.

We need to bring that expanded Child Tax Credit back. Antipoverty organizations are also calling for a new Renter's Tax Credit.

Unlike homeowners who get a mortgage tax credit, renters don't get any tax benefit for paying month after month. With a Renter's Tax Credit, renters who pay more than 30 percent of our paychecks on housing would get a monthly credit to bring their housing costs down to that percentage.

That would help more of us stay in our homes, keep our jobs, and afford basics like food and child care. It could also reduce the need for more complicated safety net supports.

April is National Fair Housing Month. If we want everyone to have a fair chance to thrive, we can start now by ensuring access to stable, affordable housing.

Ashley Dines is a mother of two and an expert on poverty with RESULTS from Las Vegas, Nevada. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

<https://otherwords.org/rents-are-unaffordable-nationwide-a-renters-tax-credit-would-help/>

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<https://www.eurasiareview.com/07042024-rents-are-unaffordable-a-renters-tax-credit-would-help-oped/>

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<https://www.counterpunch.org/2024/04/08/we-need-a-renters-tax-credit-to-make-housing-more-affordable/>

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Create a Bright Spot

Spring 2024

Lind Henry's piece about life brings up the question, "What am I creating?" ("Life is What You Create," Fall 2023). There are many bright spots in our world, but of course it is generally the negative that gets the press (*3rd Act* is a joyful exception). Acts of kindness and working to make a difference, while living lightly, are helping me create a bright spot within. Speaking up to those who represent me in Congress (202-224-3121) about critical legislation like renewing the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the READ Act can create bright spots for millions in our country and around the world. Making this call can make a difference by cutting child poverty in half by passing the CTC and giving tens of millions the opportunity for an education in areas of the world experiencing poverty with the READ Act. Why not try taking action to create a bright spot, within you and without you?

— **Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, WA**

<https://issuu.com/3rdactmagazine/docs/interior-spring-2024?fr=sMTMxNDY0NDEwMjM>



The Reality and Complexity of Homelessness in America

By Kali Daugherty

April 15, 2024

Imagine losing everything you had. Your stability, your privacy, and in many cases basic respect from others. In 2023, over 653,000 individuals (about half the population of Hawaii) in the U.S. experienced homelessness.

Homelessness is defined as a condition where an individual or family lacks a fixed, regular, nighttime residence. The reality of being homeless means sharing a crowded space with strangers and conforming to the rules of a shelter. If you aren't lucky enough to get into the limited shelter space, then you are left to make your way on the street. I have met people living under bridges, encampments in the woods, sewer crates, tents, park benches, and everything in between.

Homelessness is a complex and pervasive issue — affecting individuals in all walks of life. There's an outdated belief that those experiencing homelessness are lazy or don't want to work. Yet studies show that over 50 percent of people living in shelters and 40 percent of unsheltered people are employed either part-time or full-time. More than half of the people I've worked with who were homeless were employed full-time or had a steady income. But it still wasn't enough for them to survive.

There is a trend in our country right now to punish those experiencing homelessness, with multiple states working to "outlaw homelessness". Florida lawmakers passed a bill that will ban homeless individuals from camping or sleeping on public property. Wisconsin tried passing a similar bill that would make it illegal for individuals to sleep anywhere but on designated camping areas without getting fined. These pointless fines and the criminalization of homelessness will lead to unpaid tickets, open warrants, overcrowding in our jails, and more barriers to finding stability later. If individuals don't have access to housing, can't get into shelters, and now can't sleep outdoors, where are they supposed to go? By June 30, the Supreme Court will decide if states can continue passing laws like these which will have major implications for the future.

We need to address the real problems that contribute to homelessness in our country — the lack of resources and economic systems that are holding people back.

The primary contributor to homelessness is pretty obvious — the lack of affordable housing. Many struggle to find housing that fits within their monthly budget and with housing costs soaring it makes so many vulnerable to homelessness. In 2021, there were almost 10 million households paying over 30 percent of their income on rent and over 11 million households paying over 50 percent of their income on rent. All these households are forced to decide daily which of their bills to pay. The balance between rent and food is one the underprivileged know well. Out of all those that qualify for housing assistance, only one in four receive it.

Another contributing factor is economic instability. Low wages, job loss, and social safety nets that don't support enough. Seventy-six percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Some face difficulties in maintaining employment due to mental health, substance abuse, or lack of education and skills. The average income paid by a single full-time job is not enough to keep up with monthly expenses. These challenges make it difficult for so many to secure and maintain housing.

Right now, the resources and laws in the U.S. are not working to meet our basic needs and human rights. We need more affordable housing and living wages. The only way to make that happen is coming together as a community, demanding action and change. This is what we do at RESULTS every day.

Editor's note: Kali Daugherty is a mother, advocate, and RESULTS Expert on Poverty from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This article first was published on RESULTS' blog and is cross-posted with permission.

<https://www.chn.org/voices/the-reality-and-complexity-of-homelessness-in-america/>

Lawmakers Should Spend a Night in a Homeless Shelter

Maybe then they'd drop their opposition to even modest tax credits for low-income people like the ones I work with.

By Tiffany Tagbo

April 17, 2024

If there's one thing I could tell lawmakers, it would be to bring back the expanded, monthly, fully refundable Child Tax Credit.

Those monthly payments of up to \$300 per child cut child poverty nearly in half in just a few months. And when the credit expired in late 2021, child poverty immediately shot back up. So we know it works.

Lawmakers are now considering a more modest expansion. It doesn't go far enough, but it could lift another 400,000 kids out of poverty — children like the ones I worked with.

I grew up walking the fine line of having something and nothing all at the same time. I've experienced tumultuous times as an adult, and I've worked with people experiencing poverty and homelessness. I can tell lawmakers firsthand no matter which side of the coin families end up on, legislation and programs such as the Child Tax Credit, SNAP, WIC, and other safety net programs make a difference.

When I was growing up, my mother worked several minimum-wage jobs and relied on social programs to fill the gaps left by low wages. As a result, my siblings and I never had to sleep on the streets, go to school hungry, or wear tattered clothing like many children do.

With that help, I went on to graduate from the University of Central Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree. Eventually, I became a Child Welfare Investigator at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services following up on claims of neglect and abuse.

While I saw some of both, many of these cases were simply the conditions of poverty. Many caseworkers had never experienced poverty and couldn't make the distinction, but I could. Unfortunately, poverty landed many children in the child welfare system.

With decent pay and benefits, I was able to buy a house. But the work was soul-crushing and I eventually burned out.

You do everything right, and still — boom! You're knocked right down. One day you are employed with a good salary and benefits, the next you are unemployed without the means to afford the basics, even with a college degree. Married, pregnant, and unable to find decent work, I relied on SNAP and Medicaid to get by — barely.

My job changed, but the clients I work with haven't.

Poverty puts them in impossible situations. They must choose between food or shelter, medical care or poor health, running water or electricity. It's a vicious cycle of suffering.

Without a fixed address or help navigating the system, families can't always access assistance programs that would help them.

If my clients had the expanded monthly Child Tax Credit, many could have afforded housing, clothing, and food — and escaped the cruel cycle of poverty. In his recent budget proposal, President Biden called on Congress to restore the expanded, pandemic-era Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit that lifted tens of millions out of poverty in 2021.

A newer bipartisan tax proposal before the Senate would help. It would modestly expand the Child Tax Credit, lifting 400,000 kids out of poverty and helping 16 million overall.

The bill passed the House with an overwhelming bipartisan majority but has stalled in the Senate, where some senators are blocking it for political gain. Families deserve better. The time for delay is over. The Senate needs to vote.

I challenge lawmakers to live on the \$6 a day that SNAP recipients do, or to come and spend just one night in a shelter. Once they experience these hardships, they'll restore the expanded Child Tax Credit faster than they can say "expand it." Perhaps this should be a requirement of the job.

We must make our voices heard and speak for those who are silenced and often left out of policy discussion. We must restore the Child Tax Credit expansion and ensure the thriving of all children.

Tiffany Tagbo is a mother of two from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and an Expert on Poverty with RESULTS. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

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