

Housing Assistance through a Renters' Credit

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

Problem: We subsidize housing via our tax code – but by subsidizing wealthier homeowners rather than renters. Meanwhile, only one in four of those eligible for housing assistance gets it.

Illustrate or Inform: Because of the legacy of housing discrimination and policies that have supported wealth building for some, renters are more likely to be people of color – and low-income renters across the country are struggling to make ends meet [*Include your own experience/why you care*]. A renters' credit could help address the affordable housing crisis by capping the out-of-pocket rent and utilities expenses a low-income household would pay at around 30 percent of their income. The credit would cover any excess above that up to 100 percent of the community's "Fair Market Rent." There have been bipartisan proposals to create a renters' credit, and researchers at Columbia University estimate that a renters' credit could lift over 9 million Americans above the poverty line.

Call to Action: Will you support renters' credit proposals and voice support for a renters' credit with House/Senate leaders?

Housing Stability and Racial Wealth Inequality

Engage:

Racial wealth inequality: I'd like to talk about racial wealth inequality. The median wealth for white families is 8-10 times greater than the median wealth for Hispanic or African American families.

Housing stability: In 2016 alone, one million families were evicted, forcing households to move neighborhoods, change schools, and barring many from accessing safe and affordable housing again, due to a record of eviction.

Problem: Housing and wealth are inextricably entwined. With low-income families, particularly families of color, spending most of their income on rent, they are perpetually trying to stay afloat and thus unable to move up the economic ladder.

Illustrate or Inform: Access to safe, stable housing is critical, and impacts many parts of our lives including education, health, and nutrition. When households are forced to pay high housing costs, their spending on other necessities, like food, transportation, and health care are cut. [*If you have a story, share it here*].

Call to Action: RESULTS urges you to address our affordable housing crisis, close the racial wealth divide, and specifically:

- Support pending bipartisan bills to pilot emergency stabilization funds for families facing evictions.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing via the National Housing Trust Fund.
- Address other barriers to affordable housing and racial equity issues including restrictive zoning, credit scores, and application fees.
- Target homeownership policies for first-time homebuyers impacted by segregation and redlining to reduce racial wealth inequality.
- Pass bipartisan bills to create an Affordable Housing Task Force to study the scope of the affordable housing crisis and recommend solutions.

Prioritize Tax Policies That Focus on Working Families

Engage: Tax policy can create economic opportunity and mobility – the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit lift more families and children out of poverty than any other program.

Problem: However, policymakers and political candidates often focus on tax policies that primarily benefit wealthier Americans, rather than focusing on shared prosperity that includes low-income working families.

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

Call to Action: Will you prioritize working families by supporting the robust expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit in the Working Families Tax Relief Act (S. 1138/H.R.3157), and tell Congressional leaders to include an expansion of the CTC and EITC in any tax legislation that moves in this Congress?