



# Rise Advocacy Chapter Media

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023

Date	State	Title	Publication	Media Type
1/26/22	MA	<a href="#">We must do more to help vaccinate the world</a>	Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
2/23/22		<a href="#">Advocacy Update: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
3/11/22	MA	<a href="#">Extend the child tax credit now</a>	Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
3/17/22	CA	<a href="#">U.S. should fully fund global health group</a>	East Bay Times	Letter to the editor
3/17/22	CA	<a href="#">U.S. should fully fund global health group</a>	Mercury News	Letter to the editor
3/18/22	PA	U.S. Leadership is crucial for the global fund	Philadelphia Inquirer	Letter to the editor
3/25/22	MA	<a href="#">Too soon to relax our defenses against COVID</a>	The Boston Globe	Letter to the editor
3/29/22		<a href="#">Advocacy Update: Tuberculosis is a Woman's Issue</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
5/4/22	MA	<a href="#">Feeding the world is within our reach</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
5/26/22		<a href="#">The Impact of COVID and the Ukraine war on global malnutrition</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
6/30/2022		<a href="#">Advocacy update, your actions can make a difference</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
7/12/22	MA	<a href="#">Women forced to bear children will need more support - reinstate the Child Tax Credit payments</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
7/28/22	MA	<a href="#">Hunger is all around us</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor

8/30/22		<a href="#">Advocacy Update: Advocating for global education</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
10/19/22	MA	<a href="#">We have to make our voices heard</a>	The Boston Globe	Letter to the editor
12/21/22	MA	<a href="#">Lame duck Congress should pass End TB Now Act</a>	Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor

# 2023

2/9/23	MA	<a href="#">Poor American Families need better support</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
4/18/23	MA	<a href="#">Use the tax code to help children and families</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
4/20/23	MA	<a href="#">Congress must reinstate the child tax credit, consider renters credit</a>	The Greenfield Recorder	Letter to the editor
5/26/23	MA	<a href="#">The poor shouldn't be punished for Congress' debt ceiling dawdling</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
5/28/23	MA	Adding hardship to the most needy	The Springfield Republican (print)	Letter to the editor
5/30/23		<a href="#">Advocacy update: Help pass the READ Act</a>	TWR: The Dish	Blog Post
6/3/23	NV	<a href="#">No reason for poverty in the US</a>	Las Vegas Sun	Letter to the editor
6/4/23	FL	<a href="#">Stop this disease: The End Tuberculosis Now Act</a>	Tampa Bay Times	Letter to the editor
6/7/23	MA	<a href="#">Safety net hasn't just been frayed, it's been torn asunder</a>	The Republican	Letter to the editor
7/23/23	MA	US must support global literacy	The Republican (print edition)	Letter to the editor
7/25/23	MA	<a href="#">US must continue to support global education</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor

10/11/23	SC	<a href="#">End Child Poverty</a>	Post and Courier	Letter to the editor
10/23/23	PA	<a href="#">Noble future</a>	Philadelphia Inquirer	Letter to the editor
11/20/23	MA	<a href="#">Support a renewal of the expanded child tax credit</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor
12/20/23	MA	<a href="#">Expand the child tax credit for children in poverty</a>	The Berkshire Eagle	Letter to the editor

# 2022 Media

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Letter: We must do more to help vaccinate the world

Jan 26, 2022

To the editor: I am grateful to be fully vaccinated, having had three doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

But I am sad and angry that we will not easily end the COVID-19 pandemic due to the misguided national self-interest and vaccine hoarding of high-income nations. By failing to vaccinate the world when we had the opportunity, we have enabled the virus to mutate, causing not only omicron, which is leading us rapidly toward 1 million American deaths, but potentially creating more virulent variants.

Viruses know no borders. Until we are all safe, which now means at a minimum all vaccinated, none of us are safe. It is truly remarkable that science enabled vaccine creation and production within nine months. However, by creating artificial scarcity of manufacturing and thus not getting vaccines to lower and middle income countries, we have allowed this pandemic to continue indefinitely. Previous estimates by Public Citizen showed that we could have vaccinated the world with 11 billion vaccines at a cost of \$25 billion. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. "The emergence of the immune-evasive omicron variant means that 22 billion more mRNA vaccine doses are now needed to bring the pandemic under control,"

according to a [PrEP4All report](#) released earlier this month that was written with scientists at Harvard, the Columbia University Schools of Public Health and medicine, the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization in Canada and New York University.





## Advocacy Update: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria

February 23, 2022

This month I want to talk about [The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria](#) (Global Fund), for which the US is hosting its Seventh Replenishment Conference later this year. Together Women Rise advocates learned about the Global Fund on our Feb 15<sup>th</sup> webinar. Click [HERE](#) to see the webinar recording and slides.

The Global Fund is a multilateral organization that began in 2002 to address the pandemics that were never extinguished — HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria — which were infecting and killing millions of people, primarily in the Global South. So what is a multilateral organization? And what is replenishment about?

- According to The Borgen Project: “Multilateral organizations are formed by three or more nations to work on issues that are relevant to each of them. They ensure participation by all in the management of world affairs while ensuring the legitimacy of any relief efforts being implemented. Multilateral organizations also effectively deal with issues that are global priorities by reducing the risk of making overly quick and careless decisions in resolving issues.”
- Funding such a structure relies on replenishments: According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): “Multilateral organizations rely on the financial contributions of their members, shareholders, and other stakeholders to function and carry out their operations. The volume and quality of funding they receive have crucial

implications for their capacity to deliver.” This funding system is premised on replenishments which take place periodically, during which the various actors involved make their financial pledges.

**The Global Fund partnership has saved more than 44 million lives since its inception in 2002, cutting deaths from these three diseases in half in countries where the Global Fund has invested.** The Global Fund is distinctive for its emphasis on country ownership, as well as its inclusive partnerships with the private sector, affected populations, faith-based organizations, and civil society.

As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, bold investments in this lifesaving work are more crucial than ever to get back on track toward eliminating these infectious diseases while mitigating COVID-19’s disruptions to the fight against them. Comparing 2020 to 2019:

- HIV prevention services declined by 11%,
- 1 million fewer people were treated for TB
- Malaria testing dropped by 4%.

That is why the Global Fund must maintain focus on combating AIDS, TB, and malaria and addressing the backsliding caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. A US contribution to the Global Fund should be separate and additive to COVID-19 response efforts; it should not come at the expense of other crucial US investments in global development and humanitarian response.

#### **Why is the Global Fund so important to women and girls?**

- Women and girls have suffered disproportionately more during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resources provided by the Global Fund are essential to them.
- According to the Global Fund: “Adolescent girls and young women remain a key focus for the Global Fund’s response to HIV.” By increasing investments and focusing on the 13 priority countries where the HIV burden is the highest, “new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women have dropped by 41 per cent since 2010.”
- The Global Fund strategically promotes human rights and gender equality, recognizing the urgent need to eliminate health disparities among men and women.
- Due to cultural norms and inequalities, women may have less access to TB treatment and prevention services than men. Diagnostic delays and lower service efficiency may be due to increased stigma associated with having TB and the non-integration of TB services with other reproductive, maternal and child health services. Male family members may be unwilling to pay for these services, and women’s health may not be considered as important within the family.

- Susceptibility to malaria does not differentiate among the sexes. However, malaria can be devastating during pregnancy, both for the mother and the fetus, increasing the risks of miscarriage and maternal death. And it is a leading killer of children under five.

The Global Fund projects that for every \$1 invested, it will generate \$19 in economic returns and health gains, contributing to direct economic benefits for the US. And, while making enormous economic sense, it is crucial that we continue to address the pandemics that still remain with us, impacting millions of lives in the Global South.

The US is the largest donor to the Global Fund, typically contributing one-third of the total amount. We'll need strong US leadership later this year to ensure that the replenishment conference is a success. We hope you will join us as we advocate for women and girls for improved access to healthcare via the Global Fund. To learn more about the Global Fund and how we can support this replenishment, check out our Feb 15<sup>th</sup> [advocacy webinar](#) and the RESULTS blog [HERE](#).

If you would like to sign up for our Advocacy Group with RESULTS, please click [HERE](#). Questions? Email [advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org](mailto:advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org).

Field Code Changed

# EAST BAY TIMES

## **The Mercury News**

### **U.S. should fully fund global health group**

March 17, 2022

The global pandemic not only cost millions of lives, but it has also caused deadly setbacks in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It is imperative we continue fighting COVID-19 and prepare for future pandemics by supporting The Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

The Global Fund partnership has saved 44 million lives, reduced the death rate from these diseases by 64%, and strengthened health systems around the world. To recover from these setbacks, the United States must take the lead to replenish the Global Fund with \$18 billion over the next three years.

Thanks to Rep. Eric Swalwell for joining other Democrats and Republicans with his support of The Global Fund. I urge President Biden to include the first U.S. installment of \$2 billion in his FY23 budget request and Congress to appropriate for FY23. It will send a signal to other nations to fully fund at the replenishment conference in September.

**- Pat Payne, Castro Valley**

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/03/16/letters-755/>

Reprinted in:

EAST BAY TIMES

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2022/03/16/letters-755/>

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

## U.S. leadership is crucial for the global fund

March 18, 2022

The U.S. is back! Now we need to lead in global health. Poverty is a health risk – as we've seen by the terribly low rate of vaccination in the global south. Women suffer more: They are more likely to be impoverished and are expected to provide family care.

Global health resources were diverted to deal with COVID-19, naturally. As a result, we've seen major setbacks fighting against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

Over 20 years, the Global Fund partnership has saved 44 million lives, reduced the death rate from these diseases by 40%, and strengthened global health systems. To continue this vital work, make up for ground lost during the pandemic, and prepare for future health crises, the Global Fund needs at least \$18 billion.

I urge President Joe Biden to include the first U.S. installment of \$2 billion in his fiscal year 2023 budget request, and Congress to appropriate the same amount for FY 2023. It will send a signal to other nations that they must do their part at the pledging conference later this year. Global health impacts us all.

**– Betsy Teutsch, Philadelphia**

No online link

# The Boston Globe

Serving our community for 150 years

## Too soon to relax our defenses against COVID

March 25, 2022

Renée Graham's column "No, COVID isn't over" is spot-on (Ideas, March 20). The recent failure of Congress to allocate funding for COVID-19 in the omnibus bill means that the United States will soon face limits for coverage of vaccines, drugs, and testing. Meanwhile, in low-income countries, only about 15 percent of people have even received a single vaccine dose, let alone had ready access to testing and therapeutics.

With Omicron BA.2 rapidly spreading around the world, we could soon feel its impact here. The longer we delay vaccinating the world, the faster new variants will develop. This pandemic, killing more than 1,000 people a day in the United States, is far from over. Soon there will be more than 1 million deaths in this country, while more than 6 million have died worldwide (and according to an article in Nature, the actual number could be twice that).

Congress needs to allocate a minimum of \$5 billion for an emergency global COVID response immediately. Although this is a grossly inadequate amount, we must do whatever we can to get vaccines into arms everywhere. Failure to do so means that COVID will continue to traverse the world, mutating along the way, and never ending. COVID will remain a pandemic despite our incredible scientific advances.

**– Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

*The writer is a member of the policy team of Right to Health Action, a nationwide grass-roots movement to stop COVID-19 and prevent future pandemics.*

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/03/25/opinion/too-soon-relax-our-defenses-against-covid/>



## Advocacy Update: Tuberculosis is a Woman's Issue

March 29, 2022

March 24th was World TB Day, and I thought it appropriate to discuss long-time pandemics, such as tuberculosis, as well as the current COVID pandemic.

Let's begin with the current COVID-19 pandemic. For much of the past 12+ months, our advocacy has focused on securing \$17 billion for global vaccine equity. We and our partner organizations have worked very hard at this, but sadly Congress failed us when they did not provide ANY COVID emergency funding in the recently-passed omnibus spending legislation for fiscal year 2022. Due to disagreements regarding unspent funds on the domestic COVID front, Congress failed to provide any global vaccine support. However, **there is no unspent money for global vaccines**. As of now, we hope that the Senate will approve emergency funding at \$5 billion for global vaccines—the amount that President Biden had requested, knowing full well that this was an inadequate sum. Stay tuned.

As has been said many times before, until the world is vaccinated against COVID-19, none of us are safe. And the longer we experience vaccine inequity — vaccine apartheid — the greater the risk of viral mutation leading to a more severe variant or one that evades the protection from our current vaccines.

So let's go back to the story of tuberculosis. TB is a pandemic that has been with us for hundreds of years; it used to be called consumption. The last and only vaccine was developed 100 years ago, and it's not very effective. COVID showed us that we have the ability to create new and effective vaccines for many diseases, but we don't have the political will to spend those resources on pandemics that do not impact wealthier countries in the same way they do low-income countries. We are seeing a similar pattern evolve for COVID-19.

On World TB Day, we asked that our government provide additional funds for TB research, testing, and treatment as well as for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. We must support the Global Fund to make up for lost time as many of its resources have been repurposed to address COVID-19.

Pre-COVID we were seeing heartening trends in addressing TB. The 2020 Global Tuberculosis Report stated that 1.4 million more people got care for tuberculosis between 2015 and 2019, and the world was working toward the ambitious but achievable goal of ending the TB epidemic by 2030. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered disastrous healthcare disruptions, including care for tuberculosis patients. The results have been devastating and will continue to be so unless we act. The [Stop TB Partnership](#) suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic could contribute to 6.3 million additional cases of TB and a doubling of TB deaths over the next three years.

Women are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and unable to access adequate diagnosis and treatment for TB. And TB is the leading cause of infertility worldwide as well as leading to increased maternal deaths. Women and children account for 44% of cases of tuberculosis. According to the Treatment Action Group, “TB is one of the top three causes of death among women ages 15–45, killing half a million women worldwide each year. TB causes between 6% and 15% of all maternal deaths.”

So, tuberculosis is clearly a women’s issue, along with HIV/AIDS. Let’s continue to support the work of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. We have an excellent opportunity to do that over the coming months as we push the US to exert bold leadership when it hosts the Global Fund replenishment conference later this year.

**To take action on this, join us on April 18 at 8:30 pm ET  
for our Monthly Advocacy Webinar. [Sign up here.](#)**

If you would like to learn more about tuberculosis and the impact of COVID-19, I encourage you to [watch this sobering presentation](#) from the most recent RESULTS Global Poverty Policy Forum with Dr. Madhukar Pai from McGill University. You can also read more from Dr. Pai [here](#).

Online link: <https://togetherwomenrise.org/tuberculosis-is-a-womans-issue/>



# The Berkshire Eagle

## Feeding the world is within our reach

May 4, 2022

To the editor: The world is facing an extreme nutrition crisis compounded by the war in Ukraine on top of the pandemic.

According to Bread.org, in 2022, “nearly 14 million more children are likely to be severely malnourished because of the pandemic’s impacts. This means that 58.9 million young children — or almost the whole population of South Africa — will likely face life-threatening malnutrition if the global community doesn’t act.” Each year, half of all preventable deaths in children under 5 are attributed to malnutrition. To put this in perspective, 3.1 million children die from hunger related causes annually.

There are more than 800 million people in the world suffering from food insecurity. And the situation has worsened dramatically due to the crisis in Ukraine. Both Ukraine and Russia are the bread basket of the world, as well as the source for 80 percent of the potash used in fertilizer. The prices of wheat, corn and sunflower oil have increased exorbitantly. And as much as we see this impacting our grocery bills, the effect is that much more dramatic in low- and middle-income countries.

The U.S. has long supported broad nutritional access globally, yet more must be done. Congress is requesting \$300 million for nutrition aid via USAID. (Note that less than 1 percent of the federal budget goes toward foreign assistance, of which this is a small part.) Lacking access to food is a compelling reason for people to leave their homes and become refugees. Just think about what you might do if you could not feed your children. Helping provide appropriate nutrition will not only save lives, but help prevent further refugee crises.

I want to thank the entire Massachusetts delegation for their support of the Maternal Child Health and Nutrition Letter for fiscal year 2023. The full House has passed the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act. I hope that Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey will likewise support the corresponding Senate bill.

In a world where we have the resources to feed everyone, it is inexcusable for so many to suffer the permanent effects of malnutrition or even to face death. The

pandemic worsened this situation and now food has become weaponized in Ukraine. It is incumbent that we support robust funding for nutrition, both domestically and globally. Feeding the world is clearly within our reach.

- **Leslye Heilig, *Great Barrington***

[https://www.berkshireagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-feeding-the-world-is-within-our-reach/article\\_c19a3404-ca30-11ec-9176-33d894e60256.html](https://www.berkshireagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-feeding-the-world-is-within-our-reach/article_c19a3404-ca30-11ec-9176-33d894e60256.html)



## The Impact of COVID & the Ukraine War on Global Malnutrition

May 26, 2022

It was a pleasure speaking about why and what we are advocating for at Together Women Rise's May national webinar. For those of who missed it, the recording can be found [here](#). Our past two grantees—[Yamba Malawi](#) and [Second Mile Haiti](#)—are excellent examples of why and how we can address malnutrition. It is important to both support our grantees and their direct services as well as to advocate for Congress to fund nutrition, maternal and child health on a macro level. Each of these approaches — and even better, both together — will go a long way toward eliminating the tragedy of malnutrition.

To understand malnutrition we should begin with the definitions:

**Stunting** is based on a child's height and age, and it is a measure of chronic nutritional deficiency. The child is small—physically and developmentally—for their age.

**Wasting** is based on a child's weight and height, and it is a measure of acute nutritional deficiency. The child is underweight for their height, generally on an acute basis.

While wasting has a greater acute risk of death, stunting has a hugely negative effect on development, generating enormous economic costs through loss of human potential. It is devastating to see children functioning far below their chronologic age due to these permanent developmental insults. You might want to watch the following [interactive video](#) by Roger Thurow, as he follows the story of Hagirso, a boy in Ethiopia who he has followed over two decades as Hagirso tries to overcome the impact of stunting. This powerful story by the author of *The First 1000 Days*, sums up the need to prevent stunting far better than words can do. In fact, I often share it with congressional staff when I am asking for funding related to global malnutrition—a picture speaks a thousand words.

Food insecurity or hunger—both of which are widespread and rapidly increasing—and malnutrition are distinctly different. But both have been adversely impacted by the COVID pandemic and recently by the war in Ukraine. To this we must add the tremendous impact of climate change. Together, the net effect has been that people are choosing to leave their homes in order to feed their families—choosing to become refugees.

The impact of conflict added atop the pandemic is huge. Ukraine and Russia together represent the bread basket of the world —both in terms of grain produced and exported as well as being the major source of nitrogen for fertilizer. According to David Beasley, head of the World Food Program(WFP), they are now taking half rations from the hungry child and redirecting it to the starving one. What a terrible choice to be forced to make — essentially who shall live! And since half of the grain purchased by the WFP comes from Ukraine, food has been weaponized in this conflict. Despite the overall wealth in the world, we are allowing women and children to starve. We have the knowledge and the resources to combat malnutrition. The question is do we have the political will?

**The numbers paint a truly disturbing picture: 22% of the world's young children, or 149 million, are stunted and another 45 million are wasted.**

**Adding the impact of COVID means an additional 40 million wasted children will be seen between 2020 and 2030 as well as an additional 22 million with stunting.**

Although we have greatly decreased the number of deaths in children under five over the past several decades, we have not ended the nutrition story.

I invite you to join us, as together we make a difference. You can reach out to your members of Congress on this issue, consider sending a letter to the editor, or join one of our webinars and see what advocacy is all about.

Our next monthly Advocacy Webinar will be on June 21 at 8:30 pm ET. You can sign up [HERE](#).

Here are some helpful links.

<https://togetherwomenrise.org/advocacy/dfw-national-advocacy-chapter/>

<https://results.org/wp-content/uploads/Global-Malnutrition-Prevention-and-Treatment-Act-Congressional-Request.pdf>

<https://results.org/blog/house-passed-bipartisan-malnutrition-bill-now-onto-the-senate/>



## Advocacy Update: Your Actions Can Make a Difference!

June 30, 2022

For many of us, summer is the time to kick back and relax. But, hunger and illness do not take a summer vacation.

For me, this summer has begun with multiple meetings with my members of Congress, the personal highlight of which was a meeting with Senator Ed Markey (D-MA). The Together Women Rise Advocacy Group continues to advocate for funding for The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria as well as improved funding and policy to prevent and treat global malnutrition. Additionally, some of our members have joined our partners at RESULTS for congressional meetings, and have also advocated for the Child Tax Credit, which has been shown to dramatically reduce child poverty in the US. This is one of many ways in which the experience gained by advocating for global issues can be reflected in actions we can then take at home. Learning to become an effective advocate and building relationships enables us to increase our influence on any issue we care about.

Since I have recently written here about the Global Fund, malnutrition, and tuberculosis, I will not repeat myself. However, with the confluence of a third year of COVID, climate change causing droughts and famine, and the Russian aggression in Ukraine that has devastated global nutrition, the time to speak up — to raise our voices — is now.

Women and children are the most marginalized and the most severely impacted during these difficult times. But, you can make a difference by speaking out to your members of Congress on these issues. Individual constituents do influence their legislators — I can attest to this from actual experience.

So, this summer would you consider writing to your Senators and asking them to co-sponsor the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021 (Senate 2956)? For starters, you could take [this easy online action](#). If you want to have an even greater impact, you could contact me directly at [advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org](mailto:advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org), and I can assist you in crafting a letter and finding the foreign policy aide in your senator's office to whom you should send it.

I know that our individual actions make a difference. Imagine if we combined our voice with the voices of the thousands of Together Women Rise members ... what an impactful power we could become! Consider taking this action this summer. And, [join us](#) if you would like to take the next step.

**Our advocacy webinars this summer will take place on July 19 and August 16, both at 8:30 pm ET.** If you would like to receive the links to these webinars or learn more about our advocacy efforts, please sign up [HERE](#).

Online link: <https://togetherwomenrise.org/your-actions-can-make-a-difference/>

# The Berkshire Eagle

## **Women forced to bear children will need more support — reinstate Child Tax Credit payments**

July 12, 2022

To the editor: I am writing to urge all Americans and members of Congress to support continuation of the expanded, fully refundable child tax credit and to resume monthly payments of the credit.

Sometimes called the “child allowance,” it is an effective tool for reducing child poverty.

States banning abortion claim they will provide more support for women who are forced to have more children, yet they have not supported reinstatement of the fully refundable child tax credit for all low-income families. Both research and common sense tell us that people need money in order to work — to fix their car, pay for phone service or buy a month’s supply of diapers for the daycare center.

In 2021, the expanded child tax credit was a financial lifeline for children and families. Data shows that the expanded CTC reduced child poverty by almost half (41 percent). Recipients continued to work, lived healthier lives, invested more in their children’s education and were less likely to use payday loans. Families spent their CTC payments on rent, food and clothes for their kids.

Then last December, 51 U.S. senators let the payments expire and 3.7 million children fell back into poverty within a month.

I commend our entire Massachusetts delegation (especially Rep. Richard Neal and Sens. Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren) for their strong support of the expanded CTC and I hope more members will choose to support lifting children out of poverty.

It seems clear that passing the expansion of the CTC and continuing the monthly credit payments would help millions of children. This is not only the right thing to do, but it should lead to a physically and mentally healthier society, from which we all benefit. As more and more women are forced to bear children they cannot afford to care for, the need for child tax credits and financial support will surely grow.

**- Linda Baxter, Great Barrington**

*The writer is a retired nurse-midwife and member of RESULTS-MA and Together Women Rise.*

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-women-forced-to-bear-children-will-need-more-support-reinstate-child-tax-credit-payments/article\\_350af018-012c-11ed-82e8-9b88d7436b76.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-women-forced-to-bear-children-will-need-more-support-reinstate-child-tax-credit-payments/article_350af018-012c-11ed-82e8-9b88d7436b76.html)



# The Berkshire Eagle

## Letter: Hunger is all around us

Jul 28, 2022

To the editor: It is difficult to get the news and not hear about hunger, here or abroad.

Today with the confluence of climate change, the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine, we are living in a perfect storm.

Stateside, we see increasing numbers of folks dependent on our food banks to feed their families. In Great Barrington, [The People's Pantry](#) has seen their numbers quadruple and has, for the first time, needed to initiate a major fundraising campaign. The good news is that Congress recently agreed to continue [The Keep Kids Fed Act](#) through the summer. This will provide free meals available at schools for all children regardless of family income. The downside, however, is that for the country as a whole this will regress to an income-based program with the new school year.

We in Massachusetts are most fortunate that our state Legislature just sent a bill to the governor to continue free school meals regardless of income at a cost of \$110 million in the newly approved \$52.7 billion budget, representing 0.2 percent of the total budget – a drop in the bucket with enormous ROI.

The story internationally is more dire. Given the perfect storm, the United Nations' World Food Programme has seen the numbers of hungry and starving rise from 80 million to 135 million as a consequence of climate issues, and then to 226 million as a consequence of the pandemic, and now

to 345 million as a consequence of the events in Ukraine. He reported these terrifying numbers at a [hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee](#), where he went on to say that 50 million people in 45 countries are imminently facing famine. We must act now to prevent the destabilization that will follow in the wake of famine and starvation.

Fortunately, [USAID recently announced](#) the release of additional funds to treat malnutrition and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously passed, on a bipartisan basis, the [Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act](#). Hopefully, the Senate will soon pass this.

You can use your power as a constituent and speak to your members of Congress today. [Results](#), a group I advocate with, will support you to do this. Together, we can and must feed the world.

*Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington*

The writer is co-leader of the Together Women Rise Advocacy Chapter and the Massachusetts Group of [Results.org](#).



## Advocating for Global Education

August 30, 2022

As summer comes to an end and we ready our kids to return to school, there are many children missing out on education. In many low-income countries, children — especially girls — will not be returning to school due to inadequate education systems, discrimination, early and forced marriage, or pregnancy as a result of transactional sex or gender-based violence. And when this happens, most girls are unable to return to school. Their education comes to an abrupt end, and their futures are forever changed.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted students worldwide, and school closures continue to disrupt the education of more than **616 million students**. Additional crises, such as those in Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Yemen have only increased these gaps in education, with girls, low-income children, and children with disabilities facing the greatest barriers to education. When kids are out of school, not only do they fall behind on education, they miss essential meals as many rely on at least one regular daily meal while attending school.

According to the [World Bank](#), “individuals as well as countries benefit from girls being educated. Better-educated women tend to be more informed about nutrition and healthcare, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and their children are usually healthier, should they choose to become mothers. They are more likely to participate in the formal labor market and earn higher incomes.” A recent World Bank [study](#) estimates that the “limited educational opportunities for girls, and barriers to completing 12 years of education, cost countries between US\$15 trillion and \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.”

Two-thirds of all countries have reached [gender parity in primary school enrollment](#). In low-income countries, many in Sub-Saharan Africa, secondary school completion rates for girls continue to lag, with only 36% of girls completing lower secondary school compared to 44% of boys. By the time we reach upper secondary school, completion rates have dropped further, with the rate 26% for young men and [21% for young women](#).

We can make a connection between girls' education and reducing the adverse effects of climate change. According to [Drawdown.org](https://drawdown.org), in their recent report "Drawdown Lift", March 2022 on Climate-Poverty connections: "Education is a fundamental human right for both girls and boys. Moreover, girls' education plays an important role in building adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability to climate-related extreme events. Educated women can better protect themselves and their families from environmental shocks and are able to participate more fully in decision-making. Today, 129 million girls are out of school worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a substantive disruption in education, and projections suggest that as many as 11 million girls might not return to school. This deprivation can hinder the ability to build long-term community resilience to climate change, enhance health, improve gender equality and social equity, eradicate poverty, and foster peace and justice." Education, in particular for girls and women, opens so many doors. It is connected to our health, poverty, climate change, and our general resilience.

To begin our fall advocacy, we are working to secure the [reauthorization of The READ Act](#). Earlier this year we acted on funding global education through the appropriations process; now, we are addressing how good policy will make the most of those funds. The READ ACT ensures USAID coordinates with low-income partner countries to reach the most marginalized, particularly girls, with quality education and to reduce the hurdles girls face to stay in school.

You can influence this process by writing to your Senators, encouraging them to support this bill. This can be done quickly and easily online at the RESULTS website [here](#). Try to personalize your message—why is girls' education important to you? Have you been touched by the success of one of our grantees? How has education enhanced your life? And then consider increasing the impact by sharing this action with friends and fellow Together Women Rise members. You could even consider doing this together as a group activity at your next Rise meeting. When our legislators hear from multiple constituents, you can rest assured you will get their attention.

**Please [join us](#) for our next Advocacy group webinar on September 20th at 8:30 PM ET.** We have created a safe non-partisan space, where you can learn about and practice the tools of advocacy and the rewards of building relationships with your legislators.

Online link: <https://togetherwomenrise.org/advocacy-update-3/#more-46481>

# The Boston Globe

Serving our community for 150 years

## We have to make our voices heard

October 19, 2022

Kudos to Kim Janey, president and CEO of Economic Mobility Pathways and former acting mayor of Boston, for her op-ed “Direct cash assistance is a proven way to support struggling families.” Many analyses have demonstrated the efficacy of this form of assistance. But nothing demonstrates that fact as clearly as the dramatic reduction in child poverty when the enhanced Child Tax Credit existed and its immediate reversal within a month of its discontinuance. Millions of children were brought out of poverty, only to be plunged back into it when Congress failed to act.

Janey’s willingness to share her lived experience of poverty is commendable. At Results.org, an organization committed to the elimination of poverty by supporting people to use their voices to influence political decisions, the power of constituency is paramount. Our members of Congress need to hear from us, their constituents, and listen to our stories. We must raise our voices and tell Congress that allowing children, in this incredibly rich country, to go to bed hungry at night or to live in an unsafe home is unacceptable. We can and must do better. For starters, we must reinstate an expanded Child Tax Credit now.

– **Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/10/19/opinion/moment-there-we-made-inroads-child-poverty/>

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Lame-duck Congress should pass End TB Now Act

December 21, 2022

To the editor: The recent spread of RSV and influenza, as well as the increased number of cases of COVID-19 in the U.S., reminds us that the most infectious and ancient of the respiratory illnesses — tuberculosis — today affects millions around the world.

Even though it is preventable, treatable and curable, TB took the lives of 1.6 million people in 2021. It exploits and exacerbates poverty and disproportionately hurts the marginalized. And because TB and COVID-19 are both airborne diseases, TB resources and expertise were reallocated to address the COVID-19 pandemic, causing us to fall behind on reaching global TB goals. And despite progress in reducing global TB cases over the last decade, this reallocation of resources has caused TB cases to rise again. In 2021, there were 151 cases of tuberculosis in Massachusetts and 7,882 in the entire U.S. However, there were also up to 13 million people living in the U.S. with latent tuberculosis. This centuries-old infection warrants our attention today.

The End TB Now Act would help get us back on track. It would require the U.S. to target existing TB resources to those countries and populations needing it most. It would foster more public-private partnerships in the TB fight and increase accountability for our efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that when we focus our ingenuity, resources and energy, we can solve seemingly insurmountable problems. It's far past time to do that for the TB pandemic. We have that opportunity today in this lame duck session.

I want to thank Sen. Ed Markey and Rep. Richard Neal for their support of the End TB Now Act (S.3386/H.R. 8654) and urge Sen. Elizabeth Warren to join them before the end of this year. We cannot kick the can down the road repeatedly — the time to put these mandates into law and invest in ending tuberculosis is now.

– **Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-lame-duck-congress-should-pass-end-tb-now-act/article\\_a70b8d96-7fc4-11ed-936e-1f973fe84236.html?fbclid=IwAR028NxMngKV0k9CqBUmjuQdMXQ65MyqGmOn9GNMUrtZL8a-JISAzrqO24](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-lame-duck-congress-should-pass-end-tb-now-act/article_a70b8d96-7fc4-11ed-936e-1f973fe84236.html?fbclid=IwAR028NxMngKV0k9CqBUmjuQdMXQ65MyqGmOn9GNMUrtZL8a-JISAzrqO24)

# 2023 Media



# The Berkshire Eagle

## Poor American families need better support

February 9, 2023

To the editor: The Feb. 3 article by Matt Martinez ("South Congregational Church's food pantry has seen an increase of 300 families a week. Here's how you can help") does an excellent job highlighting the difficulties faced by so many of our residents in obtaining adequate and appropriate food.

To quote the Rev. Mike Denton from the article: "The crisis has already started. Now we're going to see how big it gets." With changes to government social support — decreases to food stamps, the failure to continue the enhanced Child Tax Credit, the increases in costs for food and rent — we are witness to a perfect storm.

During the past three years, changes to SNAP — the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — provided folks with at least an extra \$95 monthly for food. But at the end of February, these allotments will end in every state. They've already ended in 18 states with dramatic increases in visits to food banks. In October, there were more than 42.3 million people across the country participating in SNAP, receiving an average monthly installment of \$253.43. At the same time, according to The Agriculture Department's economic Research Service, a rise in food prices of 4.2 percent to 10.1 percent relative to 2022 is forecast. This creates an untenable and preventable situation.

Researchers at Children's Health Watch found that the ending of monthly child tax credit payments caused family food insufficiency to increase by 12 percent. Three million children fell back into poverty in 2022 as 19 million children in low-income families lost all or part of the tax credit.

The law as it now exists penalizes those needing it most. The child tax credit and earned income tax credit boost income to pay for basic needs and reduce poverty. They are an effective means to provide for housing and food costs, bringing enormous numbers of children out of poverty. These credits have long had bipartisan support as one of our most effective tools for reducing poverty.

We have the means to alleviate poverty, but we need the political will to do so. Join me in asking Sen. Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Richard Neal to continue their support for these changes.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-poor-american-families-need-better-support/article\\_9c192a7a-a70f-11ed-956f-bff2eaa7b8c.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_campaign=user-share&fbclid=IwAR2w2c5jUx7YCl-qOW6eN0tC0ydVxS5bK1i5WW3o9ZtxHpG0shXcbMNXjms](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-poor-american-families-need-better-support/article_9c192a7a-a70f-11ed-956f-bff2eaa7b8c.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=user-share&fbclid=IwAR2w2c5jUx7YCl-qOW6eN0tC0ydVxS5bK1i5WW3o9ZtxHpG0shXcbMNXjms)

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Use the tax code to help children and families

April 18, 2023

To the editor: Tax Day is here and, sadly, millions of low-income families will see this year's tax refunds drop or disappear altogether.

This is the direct response of Congress allowing the expanded child tax credit to expire last year.

In 2021, Congress expanded the credit to all low-income families, sending it as monthly payments. This action enabled families to have a functional budget and pay their expenses in a timely fashion. It enabled families to pay the rent and avoid eviction. This action immediately decreased the child poverty rate by almost 46 percent. Families had greater freedom to make ends meet — covering the rent and higher food expenses, medical expenses, and paying for child care — thereby enabling them to be gainfully employed. Unfortunately, the Senate allowed this expansion to expire. Overnight, millions of children were thrown back into poverty.

This tax day, 19 million children in low-income families will receive a much smaller credit, including 2 million who will get nothing. Meanwhile, families making \$400,000 per year will get their full child tax credit. Think about it: Those with the greatest need for support will receive the least. And the most impoverished will receive nothing. This is not how a responsible society cares for its young. How we care for our young will determine what their futures will look like. And their futures will dictate ours.

We have the tools to keep our children out of poverty, and we know that using the tax code this way is successful. The costs are a fraction of what we will gain in return.

I thank the entire Massachusetts delegation, in particular Rep. Richard Neal and Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, for their persistence in this fight to make the tax code work for all and to see the child tax credit expanded and fully refundable once again.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-use-the-tax-code-to-help-children-and-families/article\\_da0e8adc-dd42-11ed-bda5-f3cc4ea96353.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-use-the-tax-code-to-help-children-and-families/article_da0e8adc-dd42-11ed-bda5-f3cc4ea96353.html)

## **Congress must reinstate Child Tax Credit, consider renter's credit**

April 20, 2023

I'd like to thank Sarah Miller for her April 19 letter "Adult stress equals child stress." Poverty is a prime cause of stress. One of the most successful ways we have recently decreased child poverty, in fact by 46%, was the expanded refundable Child Tax Credit provided in 2021. Folks receiving the monthly CTC were able to pay the rent, purchase food, pay for childcare and healthcare, to name just a few benefits. But in January 2022 this program ceased and 19 million children were dumped back into poverty.

Like the letter writer, a teacher, I am a retired pediatrician, and I see the impact these policies have on our children, causing greater stress which leads to long-term health conditions, often detrimental to educational achievements and long-term success. Our future depends on our ability to house, feed, and educate our children.

The impact of homelessness on children is profound. From a First Focus Policy Brief Nov. 2021, "While homelessness for children and youth can take different forms, it always results in frequent upheaval, volatility, and a loss of stability. Children and youth are forced to make frequent moves and cycle between inadequate and often unsafe situations, causing disruption to children's education, healthcare, and more." And, it is "estimated 1-in-41 school-age children are homeless" and "those under 6 — experience twice that rate with 1-in-18 living in homeless situations."

We can fix these problems if we can find the political will. Congress must reinstate an expanded CTC and consider a renter's tax credit. I applaud the efforts of our Congressman Richie Neal and Senators Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren who have steadfastly promoted the CTC and provision of appropriate housing in our state.

**- Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

<https://www.recorder.com/ltr-Heilig-Expanding-Child-Tax-Credit-50703375>

# The Berkshire Eagle

## **The poor shouldn't be punished for Congress' debt-ceiling dawdling**

May 26, 2023

To the editor: We are getting frighteningly closer to the U.S. defaulting on its debts.

This is an almost incomprehensible possibility that would wreak havoc with global finances and the credibility of the United States. And at issue is whether to put the burden arbitrarily on the backs of the impoverished rather than on the wealthy paying their fair share.

Just as you and I budget ourselves and pay our bills, Congress has the responsibility to pay the bills it has generated. These are expenses already approved and voted upon — it is unacceptable to change your mind after the fact and refuse to pay them.

For decades, the debt ceiling was not an issue. But House GOP leaders today are refusing to pay those debts without deep cuts to SNAP, housing assistance and core global poverty programs. It is unconscionable to play Russian roulette on the backs of the neediest. Adding additional work requirements and cutting WIC, SNAP and other assistance programs will not do much in the long run to relieve the debt issues we face as a nation. However, they will unequivocally add hardship to the lives of those already facing hardships. These proposed budget cuts would force tens of millions of people, still recovering from the COVID economic downturn and facing the challenges of the rising costs of basic needs, deeper into despair. Even worse, a debt default would trigger a deep recession and throw millions of Americans out of work. It would permanently damage the respect and reliability of the U.S. government.

Instead of exercising responsible judgment, House GOP leaders are holding the U.S. economy hostage and threatening to punish Americans already experiencing poverty. This must end now. The debt ceiling must be lifted without these strings attached. I strongly urge President Joe Biden and our congressional leaders to reject any budget cuts that would increase poverty — either by adding work requirements or decreasing programmatic benefits — and to lift the debt ceiling immediately.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

The writer is co-leader of Together Women Rise Advocacy chapter and the Massachusetts group of RESULTS.org.

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-the-poor-shouldnt-be-punished-for-congress-debt-ceiling-dawdling/article\\_42d8b9ce-fa6d-11ed-b482-bb3fc6e17ce8.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-the-poor-shouldnt-be-punished-for-congress-debt-ceiling-dawdling/article_42d8b9ce-fa6d-11ed-b482-bb3fc6e17ce8.html)

# The Republican.

## **Adding hardship to most needy**

May 28, 2023

We have been getting frighteningly closer to the U.S. defaulting on its debts. This is an almost incomprehensible possibility that will wreak havoc with global finances and the credibility of the United States.

For decades, the debt ceiling was not an issue. But House GOP leaders today are refusing to pay those debts without deep cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, housing assistance and core global poverty programs.

It is unconscionable to play Russian roulette on the backs of the neediest.

Adding additional work requirements and cutting WIC, SNAP and Medicaid will not do much in the long run to relieve the debt issues we face as a nation.

However, they will unequivocally add hardship to the lives of those already facing hardships. These proposed budget cuts would force tens of millions of people, still recovering from the COVID-19 economic downturn and facing the challenges of the rising costs of basic needs, deeper into despair.

Even worse, a debt default would trigger a deep recession and throw millions of Americans out of work. It would permanently damage the respect and reliability of the U.S. government.

House GOP leaders are holding the U.S. economy hostage and threatening to punish Americans already experiencing poverty. This must end now. The debt ceiling must be lifted without these strings attached.

I strongly urge President Joe Biden and congressional leaders to reject any budget cuts that would increase poverty and to lift the debt ceiling immediately.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

No online link



...rn or students for our univer-  
torridor could be "the answer"  
w jobs here.  
ng. This editorial page has  
torridor idea. This is the  
gize" the concept.  
ion sign on, including  
alled chancellor at UMass  
board with the concept in  
ion, Brennan has a strong

economic development  
nt of the Community  
its, Megan Burke, came  
undation for Public Giv-  
which serves the entire  
flights. And so on.  
rrior, Maura Healey,  
ern Massachusetts and  
office. The Connecticut  
king for ways to help the

gether and backed a sig-  
etting of the Knowledge  
?  
t broached. The need is  
stars are better aligned to

## ims to ump p

'DONALD TRUMP.  
n the former reality  
edlessly stirring up  
some Republicans  
they recoiled from  
? needed a less outra-

ppared to be just

e the former presi-  
dency will argue that  
ednesday he'll seek  
ination, is a better

. His campaign,  
t and team of field  
DeSantis voter in  
hose states' prima-

door, though, a  
s.  
ie culture wars,  
ost beloved  
itions and disputes

OP primaries, but  
ore broadly, where  
e Democrats who  
Trump and Presi-  
herent policies, a

tter and immedi-  
ies. His detractors  
rgotten if he gets

ative to Trump —  
reating needless

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Springfield sidewalks need fixing now

In 2017 my public sidewalk was crumbling. Across the street, the city was putting in a new sidewalk, so I went across the street and asked them to look at my sidewalk.

When I came home the next day, the city of Springfield had poured an asphalt sidewalk. I then called the city and put in an application for a proper new concrete sidewalk.

Over the years I have called to see when I would get a new sidewalk and have been told I was on the list, but no timeframe was provided.

This year I called several times to try and get a year, only to be told I was on the list. This last time I called to insist on a year, I was told there are people since the year 2000 still waiting for a sidewalk.

That it outrageous. It's not that the city pays the full amount. The homeowner pays at least 50% of the cost if not more.

The city needs to look into why people are waiting 23 years to get a sidewalk. What happens if someone gets hurt on my sidewalk? Is the city responsible?

**PAM LAFORTE**  
Indian Orchard

### Honored bakery deserved notice

The Taste of Home website reaffirmed what I already knew for the past seven decades: Chmura's Bakery in the Indian Orchard section of Springfield is the best bakery in Massachusetts.

Yes, I also frequent other bakeries in the area (La Fiorentina, Giovanni's of Agawam, Koffee Kup, etc.) but my personal overall favorite is Chmura's for their breads, rolls, danishes, pastries and cakes.

I grew up a stone's throw from Chmura's and remember going there before they constructed their store. As a youngster it was always a treat to go into the actual bakery and see the breads and goodies being baked and buying a donut for 10 cents.

Now, the bakery specializes in all types of baked goods, not only of Polish and Portuguese nature, but American and others. It is also nice to see that many of their prod-

### Adding hardship to most needy

We have been getting frighteningly closer to the U.S. defaulting on its debts. This is an almost incomprehensible possibility that will wreak havoc with global finances and the credibility of the United States.

For decades, the debt ceiling was not an issue. But House GOP leaders today are refusing to pay those debts without deep cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, housing assistance and core global poverty programs.

It is unconscionable to play Russian roulette on the backs of the neediest.

Adding more work requirements and cutting WIC, SNAP and Medicaid will not do much in the long run to relieve the debt issues we face as a nation.

However, they will unequivocally add hardship to the lives of those already facing hardships. These proposed budget cuts would force tens of millions of people, still recovering from the COVID-19 economic downturn and facing the challenges of the rising costs of basic needs, deeper into despair.

Even worse, a debt default would trigger a deep recession and throw millions of Americans out of work. It would permanently damage the respect and reliability of the U.S. government.

House GOP leaders are holding the U.S. economy hostage and threatening to punish Americans already experiencing poverty. The debt ceiling must be lifted without strings attached.

I strongly urge President Biden and congressional leaders to reject any budget cuts that would increase poverty and to lift the debt ceiling immediately.

**LESLEY HEILIG, M.D.**  
Great Barrington

The author is co-leader of the Together Women Rise Advocacy chapter with Results.org.

### Tucker fired by his own bosses

A letter-writer argues in support of Tucker Carlson and that his firing is evidence of anti-free speech sentiment within the

ing' unduly partisan on U.S. website").

An important distinction that the letter-writer fails to acknowledge is that the firing of Carlson was not an act of liberal malice or government censorship. Rather, he was fired by his own private employer, Fox News, in reaction to the \$787 million settlement that Fox agreed to pay to resolve the defamation lawsuit brought by Dominion Voting Systems for having spread election fraud lies.

If the writer believes the lawsuit against Fox was somehow unjust, does he believe that defamation laws should be abolished? Should news organizations be allowed to spread falsehoods and ruin company reputations at will? The text messages between Fox News hosts Carlson, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham and their bosses establish with certainty their own non-belief in the election lies they were peddling.

Even worse, The Republican's eye-opening editorial makes it clear that the intentional deceit now extends all the way to congressional websites controlled by House committee chairs Jim Jordan and Jason Smith. Along with James Comer, these Trump minions continue the dissemination of election fraud and Biden-bashing fake news. While their appearances on Fox are not surprising, their usage of ultra-partisan rhetoric has no place within government websites.

When will Fox News viewers realize that they are being lied to?

**JOHN O'CONNOR**  
Springfield

### Shifting arguments on gun controls

Concerning firearms ownership, I don't often agree with the gentleman who wrote in from Feeding Hills, but regarding his latest letter ("Taking issue with editorial on guns," May 25) I don't necessarily disagree with it.

If legislators ever endeavor to create new gun laws, that's when terms such as "sensible," "assault weapon" and "high-capacity" would be specifically defined. If they

### LET'S HEAR FROM YOU

Send your letters of 200 words or fewer to: Letters to the Editor, The Republican, P.O. Box 1329, Springfield, MA 01102-1329; or to letters@repub.com. All letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number or email address, and are subject to editing. Join the conversation at [masslive.com/opinion](https://www.masslive.com/opinion).

I have issues when guns are defended as inanimate objects, or innocent "tools." This argument is usually followed by a listing of ordinary things that can also be used to kill. If every object that could potentially inflict death were outlawed, we'd live in a very bleak world.

Referring to killing rampages being recent development in August 1966 my mother and I watched a murderous rampage unfold on TV as Marine veteran Charles Whitm killed 15 at the University of Texas. How recent is that?

The clincher is this: "We need to determine what changed in our society to create these killers." It's the latest in stall tactics. In other words, before acting to stop mass killings, let's first nail down why they happen. The problem with this idea is that the reasons are as numerous as the list of ordinary objects that can be used as lethal weapons.

**DENIS G. BESSETTE**  
West Springfield

### Remembering Hoyt's courage

Rick Hoyt will always be remembered as a Boston Marathon icon who personified the "Yes You Can" mentality that defined Team Hoyt.

We are fortunate to have been able to call Rick a friend, a mentor, a pioneer, and a Boston Marathon finisher.

His legacy will live on through the Rick & Dick Award, which is presented each April around the Boston Marathon.



## Advocacy Update: Help Pass the READ Act

May 30, 2023

For the past two months our Advocacy Group with RESULTS has been taking a deep dive on [The READ Act](#) Reauthorization (H.R.681, S.41), which supports basic education around the world with a focus on girls. This legislation focuses on enhanced strategies for the improvement of foundational literacy and numeracy, which are essential elements of a quality basic education. And we know that educating girls is one of the most important things we can do to advance gender equality!

In low- and middle-income countries, up to 70% of 10-year-olds are unable to read a simple text. The longer children remain out of school, the less likely they are to return, and the World Bank estimates that this generation of students will lose \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings due to a lack of basic education. And quality primary education isn't the only challenge. Around 200 million youth ages 12-17 are currently out of secondary school, and 80 percent of children in low-income countries lack access to preschool. But within these numbers, the harsh reality is that girls are the most severely impacted and the most likely to be left out of school or fail to return due to child marriage or pregnancy.

At our May webinar, we were honored to have Jennifer Rigg, the Executive Director of the Global Campaign for Education-US (GCE-US), as our speaker. She brought so much additional information and guidance on advocacy. You can watch the recording, see the slides, and learn more [here](#). It was fascinating to learn the history and impact of The READ Act; the various organizations supporting global education, especially girls' education; and the multiple interconnections of Rise grantees and GCE-US collaborating organizations.

The impact of educating girls is enormous, for themselves, their families, and society in general.

For example:

- In 2020, 5 million children under age 5 died of largely preventable causes, but children of mothers with 12 years of education are 30 percent less likely to die before age 5. (UNICEF, University of Washington School of Medicine)

- For each year of school completed, future wages increase an average of 10 percent. This impact is even greater for girls. On average, for a girl in a low-income country, each additional year of education will lead to up to 20 percent higher wages. (World Bank)
- Girls with no education are three times as likely to marry before age 18 as those with secondary education. (International Center for Research on Women)
- Here is an excellent and short video on educating girls from UNICEF: [10 Benefits to Educating Girls](#)

Our Rise members are uniquely qualified and motivated to advocate for the passage of The READ Act. Accordingly, we have the opportunity to stand out within the RESULTS community as the ones who rallied to get this bipartisan bill co-sponsored and passed. You can easily join us to make this happen. We have power together and can collectively make change.

Here are some actions you can take today:

- Take this [quick online action](#), asking your Representative and Senators to cosponsor the READ Act. (5 minutes to personalize and send)
- Send a letter directly to the offices of your Representative and Senators. [Here's a sample letter with instructions to do that](#). (5-10 minutes if you personalize and send)
- Feel free to reach out to me if you need any help: [advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org](mailto:advocacy@togetherwomenrise.org).

Your actions on the READ ACT will help secure quality education and gender equity for girls worldwide. Help us pass the READ Act by September!



## **No reason for poverty in US**

June 3, 2023

I appreciate the May 25 letter “Congress needs moms’ empathy.” I write as a pediatrician, mom and grandmother, to say that not providing adequate food, housing and education for children is a tragic mistake with severe future repercussions.

We know that the fully refundable child tax credit instantly reduced child poverty by 46%, only to be as quickly reversed when Congress failed to renew it for 2022. Families used that money to buy food, pay rent, pay educational expenses and more. It kept folks in their homes and in less need of food pantries. But those earning the least are now “punished” by receiving less from the tax credit. The most impoverished are receiving the least financial support. This is poorly reasoned.

I urge Nevada’s congressional delegation to support the American Family Act, which would restore a fully refundable child tax credit for all children under 17. The U.S. ranks toward the bottom in child poverty out of all OECD nations. This is unacceptable. We know how to fix it. But we need the political will to do so.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington, Mass.**

<https://lasvegassun.com/news/2023/jun/03/no-reason-for-poverty-in-us/>

# Tampa Bay Times

## Stop this disease

The End Tuberculosis Now Act

June 4, 2023

Tuberculosis (TB), often considered a disease of the past, kills more people yearly than any other infectious disease. According to the May 9 Miami Herald article, TB cases rose 5% last year, more among young kids. TB rebounded in 2022, including a “26% increase in diagnoses in children 4 or younger.” It globally disproportionately affects impoverished communities. The World Health Organization reports that 1.6 million died of TB in 2021. Over the last few years, TB resources, equipment and expertise were drafted into the front lines of COVID-19 at the expense of the already underfunded TB response.

The End Tuberculosis Now Act (HR 1776/ S 288) would help us get back on track by ensuring current TB resources go to the right places. This accountability bill, with bipartisan support, ensures that our tax dollars are effectively used to establish bold goals to reach vulnerable populations and detect, cure and prevent all forms of TB. Thanks to Florida Republican Rep. María Elvira Salazar for her leadership on this bill, and co-sponsorship from Democratic Reps. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick and Lois Frankel. Let’s urge all of our Florida representatives in Congress to co-sponsor the End TB Now Act and pass it into law this year.

– **Karyne Bury, Hollywood**

<https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2023/06/04/inconvenient-truths-is-letter-month-letters/>

# The Boston Globe

## Safety net hasn't just been frayed — it's been torn asunder

June 5, 2023

Two recent articles — “The need continues” by Diti Kohli (Business, May 31) and “Low-income people fear high-cost change” by Kohli and Katie Johnston (Page A1, June 3) — make the case that the plight of the most impoverished must be urgently addressed.

We know how to improve the situation since we've done it before. The accommodations made during the COVID-19 pandemic — including prevention of evictions; an enhanced, fully refundable child tax credit; and greater benefits under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — decreased the number of those in poverty and the reliance on food pantries and other more temporary solutions. It also lowered child poverty by 46 percent almost immediately, only to be reversed one month after the enhanced CTC was discontinued.

We must acknowledge that our country ranks among the lowest in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for child poverty. This is an outrage and unacceptable. The recent debt ceiling negotiation has made many needy people more likely to fall through not cracks but holes in our safety net. The deal in Washington has made pawns of the impoverished at the expense of the billionaires. When will our political leadership develop both a backbone and a sense of compassion?

– **Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

*The writer, a retired pediatrician, is Massachusetts group coleader with Results.org.*

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/06/06/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-range-of-reactions-to-debt-deal/>

# The Republican.

## US must back global literacy

July 23, 2023

In a few short weeks, folks will begin back-to-school preparations. We are fortunate to live in a place where quality education is available to all. But for many around the world, that is not the case.

In low- and middle-income countries, up to 70% of 10-year-olds are unable to read a simple text. The longer vulnerable children are out of school, the less likely they are to return.

The World Bank estimates that this generation of students will lose \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings.

But we have the resources to change this. The READ Act Reauthorization (H.R. 681/S. 41) ensures that the U.S. government updates their strategy to improve foundational literacy and numeracy in education. It also requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation efforts plus a yearly report to Congress and the public.

Education is the key to reducing global poverty and to attaining gender equality. The READ Act Reauthorization will help get us there.

I thank Sen. Edward Markey for their sponsorship of this act and ask that Sen. Elizabeth Warren and U.S. Rep. Richard Neal join him in doing this. This act is due to expire in September and we cannot afford to move backwards on education.

**- Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

*Dr. Leslye Heilig is group co-leader of the Together Women Rise Advocacy Chapter with RESULTS.*

No online link



Water rushes through the log sluice at FirstLight's Cabot Generating Station in Montague. (DON TREGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

The point is that the Democratic Party grew and became a champion of civil rights, with the help of a number of Republicans in the 1960s. What of the party of Lincoln? The GOP has devolved into taking away voting rights of non-whites and erasing affirmative action as part of efforts that I believe will destroy our democracy.

DAVID G. SACKS  
Holyoke

## Democrats treat us like children

Why do Democrats harass law-abiding gun owners?

A recent letter-writer from Springfield asked a simple question: Why do people in government continue to harass law-abiding gun owners, instead of going after criminals?

The answer is simple. They don't want to go after those committing crime because it would eliminate the excuse to promote gun control.

These people in government are called Democrats, and they come in two flavors. The first type looks at the Second Amendment as an ancient artifact from history when muskets ruled the battlefield and should be discarded. They view their role in government as parents and the citizens as children who shouldn't be allowed to own dangerous toys.

The second group of Democrats view traditionalists or conservatives as their enemies. They push gun control and gun bans to punish those who believe in free speech, religion, or the individual right to bear arms.

With the 2022 Supreme Court decisions Bruen and Dobbs, both types of Democrats are very angry, and in places like California and New York have passed more stringent gun control laws. Not to be outdone, the

Massachusetts Legislature is trying to pass a bill that would make Massachusetts the worst state in the nation to live in for those who value the Second Amendment.

Democrats will tell you they aren't trying to take away anyone's guns or rights away. I hate to break it to you, but they are.

MICHAEL DIALESSI  
Agawam

## US must back global literacy

In a few short weeks, folks will begin back-to-school preparations. We are fortunate to live in a place where quality education is available to all. But for many around the world, that is not the case.

In low- and middle-income countries, up to 70% of 10-year-olds are unable to read a simple text. The longer vulnerable children are out of school, the less likely they are to return.

The World Bank estimates that this generation of students will lose \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings.

But we have the resources to change this. The READ Act Reauthorization (H.R. 681/S. 41) ensures that the U.S. government updates their strategy to improve foundational literacy and numeracy in basic education. It also requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation efforts plus a yearly report to Congress and the public.

Education is the key to reducing global poverty and attaining gender equality. The READ Act Reauthorization will help us get there.

I thank Sen. Edward Markey for his sponsorship of this act and ask that Sen. Elizabeth Warren and U.S. Rep. Richard Neal join him in doing this. This act is due to expire in September and we cannot afford to move backwards on

01102-1329; or to letters@repub.com. All letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number or email address, and are subject to editing. Join the conversation at [masslive.com/opinion](http://masslive.com/opinion).

education.

LESLIE HEILIG, M.D.  
Great Barrington

Dr. Leslie Heilig is group co-leader of the Together Women Rise Advocacy Chapter with RESULTS.

## Seeing flaws in anti-theft bill

The "Inform Consumers Act" is intended to curtail thievery from brick-and-mortar retail stores by forcing online marketplaces such as eBay or Amazon to gather the sellers' ID, address and banking information.

This bill sponsored by Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois is his answer to the growing problem of unchecked retail theft.

The senator's theory is that if the thief cannot sell it online, they will not steal it in the first place. The online companies who "fence" these products without gathering the sellers' information will have big fines charged against their companies.

In large cities, it is a daily sight to see hoodlums enter retail stores and smash and grab products and walk, not run out, with bags or shopping carts full of stolen goods.

They do not run, they do not cover their faces and they do not fear being caught because liberal prosecutors do not make them responsible. They are out to repeat the same crimes the next day.

If online portals are no longer an option, that will not stop thieves from ruining a retail business. They will sell on the street or to their neighbors. If their profit margin is hurt by this law, they will steal twice as much.

The store owner who serves the community, while probably working a 12-hour day, cannot continue, closes his business or moves away. The population who depended on that store and were paying customers are also victims.

Durbin and his fellow politicians, who most likely live in an upper-middle class neighborhood, don't have to worry about actually solving this problem.

RICH HILBERT  
Westfield

which are now unsalable, and they may not be able to plant and harvest new crops before the growing season is over.

Flooding impacted farms of all kinds: small start-ups, some of them operated by immigrant and refugee farmers; long-standing, diverse vegetable operations that sell directly to consumers through farmstands and CSAs; and large wholesale operations that supply supermarkets and corner stores across the state.

Farms of all sizes donate produce, too, so food pantries and food banks are also impacted.

The response to this disaster has been swift. Farmers have donated produce and young plants to flooded farms.

Community members have contributed generously, and volunteers have turned out to help clean up mud and debris.

State and federal elected leaders

## able to plan

came to see the dam directly from farmer Local legislators, the sets Department of Resources, UMass Extension, and non on food and farms and cooperatively address immediate for a more comprehensive to this and future disasters.

On Thursday, Gov. Healey, in his second visit in three days launch of the state's resiliency strategy initiative that

date, a source farms statewide of a safety net change events

## Our civilization

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT about the climates we live in by the buildings we construct.

The steep roofs of Thai temples and Norwegian stave churches are clues to the heavy loads of rain and snow that fall in those countries, which threaten to damage a structure if they don't slide quickly to the ground.

The traditional mud brick architecture of Africa's Sahel is a marker of an arid environment with hot days and cool nights, where thick adobe walls can keep the interior cooler than the outside air.

That parsimonious approach — adding only the features that are necessary for us to thrive in local conditions — applies across the world and throughout history. We've built our civilization on a series of local equilibria, paying the short-term cost of adapting to immediate conditions to avoid the long-term risks from extreme weather.

With each tenth of a degree that the planet warms, we are breaking those equilibria.

Climate records are falling on a daily basis right now.

In Tokyo, which swelters in summer at the best of times, city center temperatures are running 16F above the seasonal average, with the mercury rising to 101.8F in one northern suburb.

In Delhi, 25,000 people were evacuated to escape the worst floods in 45 years.

Phoenix has seen an unprecedented number of consecutive days over 110F, while temperatures breached 122F in California's Death Valley and western China's Xinjiang region and may soon do so in parts of Turkey.

Smoke from Canada's forest fires recently descended on the north and eastern U.S. for the second time in a month, while Italy is



forecast to temperature days.

Waters of South America's warmest decades have to the hottest began. It's Nino — the that tends to the people live year, and

A comm who adv that huma to minimi



# The Berkshire Eagle

## US must continue to support global education

July 25, 2023

To the editor: In a few short weeks, folks will begin back-to-school preparations.

We are fortunate to live in a place where quality education is publicly funded and available to all. But for many around the world, that is not the case. Right now, Congress has the opportunity to see that quality education is supported in 50 other countries through the READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R.681/S.41). READ stands for Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act.

Per Congress.gov: "This bill reauthorizes a law that requires the implementation of a strategy to promote quality basic education in partner countries by (1) expanding access to basic education for all children, particularly marginalized children and vulnerable groups; and (2) improving the quality of basic education and learning outcomes." Today, this means ensuring the U.S. government updates its strategy to improve foundational literacy and numeracy in basic education and requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation efforts. This is not a funding bill; rather it lays out how USAID will implement and monitor those funds already allocated to basic education.

In low- and middle-income countries, up to 70 percent of 10-year-olds are unable to read a simple text — the definition of learning poverty. The longer vulnerable children are out of school, the less likely they are to return. For girls in particular, we are already witnessing large increases in child marriages and early pregnancies since the COVID pandemic. The World Bank estimates that this generation of students will lose \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings due to this profound learning poverty.

We can change this. Quality education is the key to reducing global poverty and to attaining gender equality. The READ Act Reauthorization will move us forward. However, this act is due to expire in September, and we cannot afford to move backward. Therefore, time is of the essence. In the last Congress, this bill passed the House on a bipartisan basis, but the clock ran out in the Senate. Thus, we have had to begin anew, and the clock is ticking toward expiration if we do not take action now.

I wish to thank Sen. Edward Markey and Rep. Jim McGovern for their sponsorship of this act and ask that Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Richard Neal join them. I know that the entire Massachusetts delegation supports global education, but they must act now.

**- Dr. Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

*The writer is co-leader of the RESULTS.org Massachusetts group and its Together Women Rise Advocacy Chapter.*

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-us-must-continue-to-support-global-education/article\\_8a7b0bb8-272e-11ee-9171-0ba765f82ca8.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-us-must-continue-to-support-global-education/article_8a7b0bb8-272e-11ee-9171-0ba765f82ca8.html)

# The Post and Courier

GREENVILLE | SPARTANBURG

## Greenville News

### SC Sen. Tim Scott, other lawmakers need to extend Child Tax Credit to fight child poverty

October 1, 2023

The most recent U.S. Census data sounded an alarm that we all need to hear: The child poverty rate more than doubled between 2021 and 2022. That's more than 5 million additional American children living in poverty. We know the reason for this increase in poverty, and we don't have to stand by while our children suffer and fail to thrive. In 2021 Congress expanded the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to all families with low or no income and sent it in monthly payments. As a result, parents had the financial resources and flexibility to meet their children's basic needs. Unfortunately, a small group of politicians in Washington blocked an extension of the CTC monthly payments at the end of 2021. Census data confirms the disastrous consequences: an increase from a record-low child poverty rate of 5.2 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent — more than one in 10 of our children — living in poverty in 2022. We were on the road to ending child poverty in 2021. This year, it's time to finish the job. South Carolina's Sen. Tim Scott has a particularly influential position as a member of the Senate Finance Committee. I urge Scott and all our representatives and senators to expand the CTC to all families with low income and to reject any tax legislation that does not.

– Mary Lash, Piedmont

<https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/readers/2023/10/01/tim-scott-child-poverty-rate-shows-why-lawmakers-must-extend-child-tax-credit/70980336007/>

*Reprinted in:*

The Post and Courier

GREENVILLE | SPARTANBURG

<https://epaper.postandcourier.com/app/POS670/editionguid/bb401934-fe72-4220-b0e8-9db791f031a9>

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

## Nobel future

October 23, 2023

How thrilling to read about the latest Nobel Prize winners, women educated in faraway places whose spectacular discoveries help the whole planet. How much global talent languishes when girls (and boys) aren't in school? Where is the next Katalin Karikó? New data from UNESCO reports 250 million school-age children aren't in school — that's one-sixth of the world's children. There is hope: The 2023 READ Act Reauthorization Act addresses this crisis by boosting global education, to ensure all children can access quality instruction. The READ Act will empower the world to get back on track with education, particularly for girls in conflict-ridden nations. I commend my U.S. representative, Dwight Evans, cosponsor of the READ Act. While the House dithers, this bill sits. We can't wait — our next Nobel winner needs to get to school.

– **Betsy Teutsch, Philadelphia, [bpteutsch@comcast.net](mailto:bpteutsch@comcast.net)**

<https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/letters/letters-to-the-editor-october-23-2023-20231023.html?query=read%20reauthorization>

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Support a renewal of the expanded child tax credit

November 20, 2023

To the editor: It is with much gratitude that I acknowledge the very recent passage of a continuing resolution by the 118th Congress.

Although they have only kicked the can farther down the road, at least the lights have remained on for the time being. However, we can again look forward to more time being spent over these sorts of negotiations rather than actually doing the work at hand to remedy the problems.

By not reinstating a fully refundable child tax credit, which expired in January 2022, we continue to have an extremely high rate of child poverty. In fact, the U.S. ranks 31st out of 34 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development nations on this measure.

"In 2022, the [supplemental poverty measure] child poverty rate jumped to 12 percent, more than twice the 2021 rate of 5 percent. This equates to about 9 million kids in 2022 living in families who do not have enough resources for basic needs such as food, housing and utilities," according to The Annie E. Casey Fund.

Instead, we could again have a fully refundable child tax credit with dramatic reduction in child poverty rates overnight. "The expanded child tax credit would move the United States closer to the mainstream: from 31st to 24th among the 34 advanced democracies with comparable data," according to the Center on Poverty and Social Policy.

Our ranking among comparable nations is a travesty. We must do better in what many consider the wealthiest nation in the world.

The good news is that there is already legislation in the House to do this: The American Family Act (HR.3899). By reinstating a fully refundable child tax credit, we can improve the lives of millions by providing them with the resources to feed, house, educate and better provide for their families.

There is no better time than the present to reach out to our legislators and encourage them to promote this legislation. And at the same time thank those — Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey and Rep. Richard Neal — who have advocated for an expanded child tax credit nonstop.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

*The writer is the Massachusetts group co-leader for Results.org.*

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-support-a-renewal-of-the-expanded-child-tax-credit/article\\_76cf3a22-87db-11ee-9a9d-1389f48b2011.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-support-a-renewal-of-the-expanded-child-tax-credit/article_76cf3a22-87db-11ee-9a9d-1389f48b2011.html)

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Expand the child tax credit for children in poverty

December 20, 2023

To the editor: One of the timeless characters of the holiday season is Ebenezer Scrooge, the selfish, miserly businessman with no heart.

But Scrooge's story was one of redemption. When faced with his role in perpetuating hunger and poverty, he changed.

This holiday season, too many children in our country still face those harsh realities. Holiday toys and treats are out of reach when families cannot afford food, housing and heat.

But Congress could help by expanding the Child Tax Credit. Every time the CTC is expanded to children from families with low income, child poverty drops. No other tool works better at lifting kids from poverty.

This season, will our members of Congress follow the old Scrooge's lead and let those around them needlessly suffer? Or will they make "mankind their business" and enact legislation to help? At the end of the story, Scrooge learned his lesson. Our leaders should do the same by expanding the child tax credit now.

**- Leslye Heilig, Great Barrington**

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/letter-expand-the-child-tax-credit-for-children-in-poverty/article\\_45cb304e-9e37-11ee-9cf2-3f59387a0b58.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-expand-the-child-tax-credit-for-children-in-poverty/article_45cb304e-9e37-11ee-9cf2-3f59387a0b58.html)