

November 10, 2023

Dear Senator/Representative:

As organizations representing a broad array of religious beliefs and faith traditions, we believe there is a moral imperative to end child poverty. The Child Tax Credit has a proven, transformative impact on the lives of children and working families, and we call for its inclusion in any moving tax package. **We insist that Congress not provide any tax relief to corporations without expanding the Child Tax Credit specifically for low-income families.** Ultimately, we support a larger, monthly, fully refundable Child Tax Credit. **We are particularly concerned about the 19 million children in low-income families who do not receive the full credit because their families do not earn enough money to qualify for the maximum credit.**

As people of faith, we share a common call to work for an end to hunger and poverty. In the Christian tradition, Jesus calls the faithful to prioritize the needs of the *“least of these”* and to be moved by compassion and love to meet the needs of one’s neighbor. In Proverbs 31:9, we are reminded of our responsibility to *“Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.”* In the Surah Baqarah, verse 215, Allah says, *“They ask you as to what they should spend. Say ‘Whatever good you spend should be for parents, kinsmen, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, Allah is all-aware of it.’”* Yet, we repeatedly witness policy decisions that neglect to prioritize individuals and families unable to access basic living standards.

Substantial evidence demonstrates the Child Tax Credit’s effectiveness in reducing poverty. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that the expiration of the expanded Child Tax Credit at the end of 2021 led to the largest spike in child poverty on record. Currently, 19 million children cannot access the full Child Tax Credit because their parents do not earn enough money. A parent with two children working full time at minimum wage currently cannot access the full value of the Child Tax Credit. ***It is critical Congress prioritize these 19 million children who get a partial credit or none at all because their families’ incomes are too low and maximize the number of children lifted above the poverty line.*** Further, according to researchers at Columbia University, **monthly payments are far more effective at reducing child poverty than annual payments.** A study by the Niskanen Center shows that the Child Tax Credit disproportionately helped families in rural states that have shed jobs in recent years to due trade deals and factory automation. At a time when budgets are squeezed, this support can pay dividends in helping families stay afloat.

Historically, refundable tax credits have been championed by both parties, and leaders have worked across the aisle to improve the Child Tax Credit through the years. That precedent should continue given its demonstrated effectiveness and the pressures on struggling families right now.

Congress has the power to improve programs that reduce child poverty and help millions of families afford basic costs. Expanding the Child Tax Credit would make a real difference in the lives of so many in our communities and for Americans of all faiths and religions.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service Committee

Bread for the World
Center on Faith and Justice at Georgetown University
Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Church World Service
Citygate Network
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Dean's Advisor, Virginia Theological Seminary
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faith for Justice
Founder, Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, Georgetown University
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Latino Christian National Network
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National African American Clergy Network
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Hispanic Pastors Alliance
National Latino Evangelical Coalition
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Office of Justice and Ecology, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sojourners-SojoAction
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries