



The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dec. 12, 2022

Dear Senator Portman,

As people of faith, we share a common call to work for an end to hunger and poverty. All of our sacred texts inform our passion for mercy and justice. 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 the Jewish tradition, we are called upon to support neighbors in need, *"And if your neighbor becomes poor and his means fail him with you, then you shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall live with you"* (Leviticus 25:35). 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.'"* Our collective faith traditions call upon us to prioritize the most vulnerable amongst us.

We believe it is a moral imperative to end child poverty, which is a stain on the soul of our nation. Today, we write to request the inclusion of an expanded, fully refundable, monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) in any end of the year tax extender package. This program has a proven, transformative impact on the lives of children and families, and justice demands its inclusion.

As people of faith we are committed to the welfare of all children. In 2021, the expanded Child Tax Credit reduced child poverty to a record low. When Congress allowed the expanded credit to expire, nearly 4 million children were pushed back into poverty. Additionally, nationwide, there are 19 million children who are not receiving the full CTC because their families do not earn enough money [1]. This is a profound moral failure.

Under current law, too many of Ohio's children in families with the lowest incomes receive no CTC or receive a smaller credit than children in families with higher incomes. In our state, there are 678,000 children under the age of 17 whose families are excluded from the full CTC [2]. Expanding the CTC so that it reaches more of those families ensures that Ohio's children, regardless of the color of their skin and their zip code, not only have their basic needs met, but live healthier, longer, and more productive lives.

NETWORK educates, organizes, and lobbies for social and economic transformation. We are rooted in Catholic Social Justice and open to all who share our passion. We value women's leadership, welcome secular and religious backgrounds, affirm LGBTQ+ identities, and engage in ongoing racial justice work.

Our nation's historically high child poverty rate is a policy choice. Recent US Census data reveals a fundamental truth: Congress has the power to make a different choice, to put families first with a proven-effective strategy to reduce child poverty and boost incomes for people who aren't paid enough to make ends meet, by expanding the CTC.

We hope that you will help lead the effort to reach a bipartisan agreement to expand the CTC.

[1] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/year-end-tax-policy-priority-expand-the-child-tax-credit-for-the-19-million>

[2] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/year-end-tax-policy-priority-expand-the-child-tax-credit-for-the-19-million>

Sincerely,

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