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## **Christian Leaders Support New Omnibus and Tax Bills**

**Washington, D.C., December 17, 2015** – Circle of Protection leaders today praised congressional negotiators for including key anti-poverty provisions in the agreements reached late Tuesday night on the fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending bill and the tax bill.

The tax bill makes permanent important improvements to the earned income tax credit (EITC) and the child tax credit (CTC). The EITC and CTC together lift more people out of poverty than any other program in the U.S. besides Social Security. Making these EITC and CTC provisions permanent will prevent 16 million people from falling into or deeper into poverty.

The Circle of Protection has been calling on Congress to make the EITC and CTC improvements permanent, and this bill would be a major victory for low-income working families.

The FY 2016 omnibus bill increases funding for children's programs like Head Start, and provides alternative access to food during the summer months. The bill also increases funding for international food aid and maternal and child health and nutrition, and continued funding to build long-term agriculture sustainability.

Notably, the bill does not include a provision to increase subsidies to the world's largest shipping companies to ship food aid. The provision could have resulted in up to 2 million people losing life-saving U.S. food aid while increasing transportation costs to taxpayers by \$75 million. Circle of Protection leaders had cautioned lawmakers against this provision.

This fall, the Circle of Protection delivered a list of five "must-do" items for Congress to accomplish before the end of 2015. If the EITC and CTC improvements become permanent, Congress will have acted on three of these five must-do items. The other two items Congress accomplished are avoiding brinksmanship and passing a budget that responsibly addressed sequestration without further burdening poor and vulnerable Americans.

Circle leaders are still urging lawmakers to pass the Global Food Security Act and a child nutrition bill.

The [Circle of Protection](http://circleofprotection.us) is a coalition of many and diverse Christian leaders working together to help and provide opportunity for hungry and poor people in the U.S. and around the world.

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