



CIRCLE *of* PROTECTION

November 22, 2022

To President Biden and Members of Congress,

We are writing to urge you to expand the Child Tax Credit, especially for the poorest families during the Lame Duck Session. Specifically, we support full refundability for the poorest families and monthly payments - two provisions that are especially important to the CTC's impact among children.

The temporary expansion of the CTC that Congress approved last spring reduced child poverty and food insecurity among families with children to lower levels than ever before in our nation's history. Evaluative studies from Columbia University and Washington University show that the families who benefited used the money for food, rent, and other basic household expenses. They also show that employment among adults in these families did not decline. How can we not build on these wonderful results?

Yet the expanded CTC expired last December, and child poverty has increased dramatically this year - up 25%. Inflation is hitting families with children especially hard, adding to the urgency of action on the CTC. Nineteen million children did not receive the full CTC amount because their parents' incomes are too low, including 45 percent of all Black children and 39 percent of Latino children. Expanding the CTC through full refundability is one step to meaningfully reduce racial disparities.

The CTC has long enjoyed strong support on both sides of the aisle, and we hope that bipartisan legislation in the Senate will allow for a new expansion of the CTC, especially for the poorest families. We understand that Congress may consider extending tax cuts for corporations in the lame duck, and any legislation along these lines should surely include an expansion of the CTC, including full refundability for low-income families. We affirm the importance of fiscal responsibility, but when it comes to offsets, do not apply a different standard to tax breaks for families than tax breaks for businesses.

The Circle of Protection is a coalition of national church bodies and related ministries representing the diversity of Christianity in this country. A number of the leaders in the Circle oversee thousands of congregations, and the organizations in the Circle together have close to 100 million members. Our churches are on the frontlines of assistance to people in need across the country and around the world, and all of us agree that our government should be doing more to provide help and opportunity to people in poverty. These convictions are rooted not in political ideology but in religious faith.

Sincerely,

John Ashmen, President and CEO, CityGate Network

Rev. Dr. Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Rev. Dr. David Beckmann, Dean's Advisor for Political and Economic Justice, Virginia Theological Seminary; Coordinator, Circle of Protection

Dr. Iva E. Carruthers, General Secretary and CEO, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference

Rev. Eugene Cho, President, Bread for the World

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church

The Most Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church

Rev. Carlos Malavé, President, Latino Christian National Network

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD, President and CEO, Catholic Charities USA

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, Interim President and General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Ralph Middlecamp, President, Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Bridget Moix, General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Rev. Ted Penton, SJ, Secretary of Justice and Ecology, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Bishop A.J. Richardson, Senior Bishop, Tenth Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President and Founder, National Latino Evangelical Coalition

Rev. Lori Tapia, National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President, Sojourners

Rev. Jim Wallis, Inaugural Chair and Founding Director, Center on Faith and Justice at Georgetown University

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; President, Skinner Leadership Institute