December 2, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

Our nation's historically high child poverty rate is a choice. Recent US Census data reveals a fundamental truth: Congress has the power to make a different choice, to put families and workers first with proven-effective strategies to reduce child poverty and boost incomes for people who work but aren't paid enough to make ends meet by expanding the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to urge you to prioritize expanding these programs as part of the anticipated end-of-year budget bill. The time to pass these policies is *now*, as this is the last chance this Congress has to act.

Even as Congress has this tremendous opportunity to deliver for families and workers, press reports indicate lobbyists are pressuring Congress to deliver more significant tax breaks for businesses and corporations. One example is the push for a tax break for companies engaged in "research and experimentation," including tech, pharmaceuticals, and other large corporations.

We urge you to put families and workers first: There should be no expanded tax breaks for businesses and corporations without expanding the CTC and EITC.

Under current law, too many children in families with the lowest incomes receive no CTC or receive a smaller credit than children in families with higher incomes. Expanding the CTC so that it reaches more of those children will go a long way toward improving families' ability to make ends meet and reducing child poverty.

As you know, in March of 2021 Congress temporarily expanded the CTC which benefitted 3.3 million children in New York and provided more than $5 billion in cumulative payments to New York families. But the expansion has expired. The overwhelming majority of those kids in families with low incomes used the monthly CTC payments to cover everyday challenges and basic expenses, such as food, utilities, rent, and diapers. Before the expansion, roughly 27 million children received less than the full CTC, including many who got no credit at all — not because their families earned too much, but because of a flaw in the law that excludes kids from families with the lowest incomes. Those children excluded from the full credit included roughly *half* of all Black and Latino children, and children in rural areas. In New York state, roughly 1.1 million children are left out of the full credit because their families' earnings are too low. This includes about 224,000 Black children and 396,000 Latino children in New York.

With passage of its landmark Child Poverty Reduction Act this past year, New York state has officially set a goal to cut child poverty in half in the next decade. The 2021 CTC expansion, combined with other relief efforts, helped lower child poverty by more than 40 percent between 2020 and 2021, Census data show. Peer-reviewed cost-benefit analyses of the expanded CTC have also shown that it has one of the strongest returns on investment of any social policy reform. In fact, permanently expanding the federal CTC back to its pandemic levels would, all by itself, take New York State most of the way toward meeting its child poverty reduction goal.

Meanwhile the loss of that expansion has hurt children. In New York this August-September, with no Child Tax Credit, more than 14 percent of people with children reported that they sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the previous week. That was up nearly 63 percent over the previous August, when families were receiving the CTC. We know people with children are struggling in New York: from mid-September to mid-October of this year, well over half (59 percent) said they were finding it somewhat or very difficult to pay their usual household bills. In 2021, more than half of all New York households with incomes under $50,000 were paying half or more of their income on rent, and this year's September-October data show fully 39 percent of New York's tenants with children were behind in their rent. Restoring the Child Tax Credit would greatly reduce these threats to families' economic security, and it will pay off. Investing in children in low-income families by expanding programs like the Child Tax Credit has shown success in improving outcomes for those children over their whole lives, including higher educational attainment, better health, and higher earnings as adults.

We also urge you to expand the EITC for workers paid low wages who do not have children living with them, which also indirectly benefits children by including non-custodial parents and other family members. This part of the EITC has not been adjusted for nearly 30 years (outside of the temporary, one-year 2021 expansion) and as a result, about 6 million of these low-income workers 19 and older have incomes below the poverty line, once federal taxes are taken into account. This commonsense proposal is long overdue and has enjoyed bipartisan support in the past.

Congress has a critical choice to make now: Will it expand the CTC and EITC, to put more kids on an upward trajectory for life and help working people make ends meet, or will it go home without reaching a bipartisan agreement on these straightforward policies?

We hope we can count on you to fight for these policies to support kids and workers – and to make sure any final legislative package in December doesn't give more tax breaks for corporations without supporting New York's people.

We appreciate your consideration of our views.

Signed:

Graham-Windham
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation
Greater Rochester Summer Learning Assoc.
Early Childhood Development Initiative
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Empire Justice Center/CASH
You Gotta Believe
A-BR
The Center for Youth Services, Inc.
Liftoff Western New York
Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong, University of Rochester
Graham Windham Harlem FTR
Forestdale, Inc.
Families Together in New York State
WNY Women's Foundation
All Our Kin
Mother Goose Daycare
Ece on the move
ESCCC
Monroe Community College
Robin Hood
Western New York Child Care Action Team
University of Rochester
Providence Housing
Childrens Home of Jefferson County (CHJC)
Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.
Mohawk Indian Housing Corporation
Neighbors Link
Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County, Inc.
Finger Lakes Action Program
Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
Adirondack Community Action Programs
Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation
Mohawk Valley CAA
YWCA White Plains and Central Westchester
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Causewave Community Partners
LifeWorks Community Action, Inc.

Connected Communities
Ibero-American Action League
Rmapi
Columbia Opportunities, Inc.
Chautauqua Opportunities Inc.
The Children's Law Center
Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton
New York State Community Action Association
Westchester Jewish Community Services
North Country Workforce Development Board
The Charles J Newman Co LLC
Essex County Community Services and Essex County Mental Health
Mountainview Pediatrics
AEC BOCES
BeOutdoorKids
Southern Adirondack Child Care Network
Adirondack Birth-to-Three Alliance
The Education Trust–New York
UJA-Federation of New York
JMACforFamilies
Food Bank For New York City
Early Care & Learning Council
The Bridge Project
Charles Newman Co., A Hilb Group Company
OSWEGO COUNTY OPPORTUNTIES
My Sisters place
Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance
Mount Vernon United Tenants
Department of Social Services
Hudson River Museum
Abbott House
LAWYERS FOR CHILDREN
Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York
Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley
St. Luke Lutheran Church
Adirondack Foundation
NYAPRS.org
Nonprofit Westchester
Y-COP of Mount Vernon

Rise
Public Health Solutions
Henry Street Settlement
COFCCA
Educational Alliance
Center for Family Representation
Feeding Westchester
Mariners' Temple Baptist Church
United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region
Community Health Care Association of New York State
United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes
NYC Family Policy Project
Community Resource Center
New Rochelle YMCA
Sister to Sister International, Inc.
Westchester Children's Association
Westchester Black Women Politicus Caucus
CIDS
Action for a Better Community, Inc.
United Way of Westchester and Putnam
Hope's Door
WWA
Alison Paul Grant Writing
G.O.O.D. for Girls, Inc.
Court Appointed Special Advocates of NYC
Children's Aid
ParentChild+
Poppy Muse Inc.
Court Appointed Special Advocates
Northern Rivets Family of Service
Head Start of Rockland, Inc.
The STEM Alliance
NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3
Family Service Society of Yonkers
League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County, New York
Children's Defense Fund-New York
Alliance for Quality Education
Community Service Society of New York
The New York State CASA Association, Inc.
Prevent Child Abuse NY

Kaufman
University of Rochester Medical Center
Program Design and Development, LLC
Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York
Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
Safe Horizon
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
FPWA
Homeless Services United Inc
United Neighborhood Houses
Arab-American Family Support Center
YMCA of Greater New York
The Child Center Of NY
The Children's Agenda