August 3, 2021

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations representing a broad array of religious beliefs and faith traditions, we thank you for the historic one-year expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) programs in the American Rescue Plan. These expansions are already serving as a lifeline helping people in distress cope with the economic effects of the covid-19 pandemic. As you now work to pass bipartisan infrastructure and reconciliation bills, we call on you to invest in the future by making these expansions permanent and fully inclusive to support hardworking individuals and families.

Our values and scriptural teachings all affirm our need for policies that promote a nation where all individuals and families can live with dignity, enough food to eat, a safe place to live and a life that affords them meaningful opportunities. "If there is a needy person among you...do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kin. Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need (Deuteronomy 15:7-10)."

The EITC and CTC were originally enacted as broad bipartisan poverty-fighting measures to incentivize work for low wage earners and help working families offset the cost of raising children. With the American Rescue Plan’s expanded age limits and increased benefits for single low-income earners, the EITC is now reaching a greater number of hardworking Americans. The newly expanded CTC is a key solution to the deepest effects of childhood poverty in our nation, with the payments expected to cut child poverty in half. The impacts on racial disparities are even more dramatic, cutting poverty for Black children by 52 percent, Hispanic children by 45 percent, and Indigenous children by 61 percent.

EITC and CTC funds are a critical tool to jumpstart our economy as our nation recovers from the recent downturn. These funds are already going directly back into the market, with families using the much-needed payments for rent, food, medical bills, and other priorities including preparing children to return to school in the fall. These programs are critical for so many families as many states do not have a functioning program of cash assistance, and it can be nearly impossible for families to access the assistance they need when they fall on hard times. Further, Black and Hispanic children are more likely to live in states with the lowest TANF benefits, where monthly benefits for a family of three hovers at just around $200 per month. These critical programs will not only help families struggling to make ends meet, but will also encourage family growth and improve children’s long-term outcomes. The research is clear that additional income supports children’s educational attainment, employment, and health.

The temporary EITC and CTC expansions have provided a much-needed boost to the community and the economy; however, we risk losing all that we have gained with the expiration of the
expansions at the end of the year. We urge you to permanently expand the EITC and CTC to support individuals and families as they recover from the pandemic and beyond. These programs should be fully inclusive, reaching all individuals and families who need it, including immigrant children, to ensure that families are able to meet their children’s basic needs, weather unexpected expenses, and plan for the future.

The next recovery package provides a significant opportunity to strengthen the foundation for our nation’s future. We urge you to invest in hardworking individuals and families by permanently expanding the EITC and CTC. The faith community stands ready to partner with you to build this future together.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Agudath Israel of America
Association of Jewish Aging Services
Bread for the World
Catholic Charities USA
Child Welfare League of America
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church World Service
Council for Health & Human Service Ministries, United Church of Christ
Faith in Public Life
Friends Committee on National Legislation
General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church
Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Women International
Keshet
Lutheran Services in America
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC)
National Council of Jewish Women
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Rabbinical Assembly
RESULTS
Society for Humanistic Judaism
Sojourners
The Jewish Federations of North America
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ Disabilities and Mental Health Justice
Women of Reform Judaism
Local, State, and Regional Organizations:

Bethlehem Interfaith Group
Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Council
Buffalo NAACP Branch
Congregation Sholom
Faith Action Network of Washington State
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center
Goldring Family Foundation Center for Jewish-Multicultural Affairs
Hinenu: The Baltimore Justice Shtiebl
Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council
Inspiritus
JEVS Human Services
Jewish Community Relations Council/American Jewish Committee – Detroit
Jewish Community Relations Council of Broward County, FL
Jewish Community Relations Council of Cincinnati
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans
Jewish Family and Career Services of Atlanta
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis
Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties
Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas
Jewish Family Service of Greater Kansas City
Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans
Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of MetroWest, NJ
Jewish Family Service of St. Paul
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey
Jewish Federation of Chicago
Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven
Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley
Jewish Federation of San Diego County
JFCS Chicago
JFS, Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis
JFS Houston
JVS Boston
JVS Career Services
JVS SoCal
Leo Baeck Temple
Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley
Mid Kansas Jewish Federation
Touro Synagogue
UJA Federation of New York
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley
Zoroastrian Association of Metro Washington, Inc

cc: Senator Ron Wyden, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
    Senator Michael D. Crapo, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
    Representative Richard E. Neal, Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
    Representative Kevin P. Brady, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee
    Members of the Senate Finance Committee
    Members of the House Ways and Means Committee