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Wade Henderson

February 3, 2022

Dear Senator,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 230 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to underscore the importance of continuing the refundable child tax credit (CTC), closing the Medicaid coverage gap, and increasing fair and affordable housing. These investments are top priorities of the civil and human rights coalition and are critical to the racial equity impact of any final agreement on the Build Back Better agenda.

We know that discussions continue in the Senate and with the administration about a revised version of a Build Back Better package that can secure passage through both chambers. We strongly believe that there is a path forward for a deal that includes an improved CTC that ensures the continued coverage of our poorest children by making the credit fully refundable, closing the coverage gap, and investments to address staggering home sale and rental prices.

The American Rescue Plan's CTC expansion reduced child poverty by 40 percent — an historic achievement. The success of the policy was driven by the provision making the credit fully refundable, meaning that children in families with the lowest incomes could receive the full amount of the credit. Previously, 27 million children — including roughly half of Black and Latino children and half of children in rural communities — received less than the full credit amount, which higher-income children received, because their parents' incomes were too low. The monthly payments allowed those families to pay for groceries, school supplies, and housing. Unfortunately, Congress allowed the expanded monthly refundable credit to expire at the end of 2021, putting each of those families at risk. Nearly 10 million children, more than half of whom are Black and Latino, are at risk of slipping back below the poverty line or deeper into poverty.¹

Closing the coverage gap would provide health coverage for the first time to about 2.2 million people living below the poverty line in the 12 states that have refused to take up the option to expand Medicaid.² Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American individuals make up over 60 percent of that group.³ It is unacceptable that these millions of Americans, because of where they live, have been denied access to health care for years, a situation made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/if-congress-fails-to-act-monthly-child-tax-credit-payments-will-stop-child>

² <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/federal-action-needed-to-close-medicare-gap-extend-coverage-to-22-million>

³ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-medicare-gap-would-help-diverse-group-and-narrow-racial>

For most families, their home is their biggest expense. But too many families pay too much of their incomes in rent, and the supply of affordable, safe apartments continues to shrink. Home sale prices continue to soar, shutting many would-be first-time homebuyers out of an important chance to build financial stability. Families of color continue to face particularly high barriers to homeownership, contributing to a massive racial wealth gap. Our country needs significant investments to increase the supply of affordable homes, reduce barriers to fair homeownership, and address widespread homelessness.

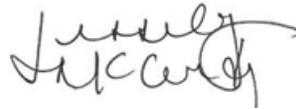
We urge you to keep pushing for an agreement on a revised package to deliver meaningful investments that will address racial inequities and support the families and communities that need it most. We are ready to work with you and your colleagues to chart that path forward.

Please reach out to June Zeitlin, senior advisor, at zeitlin@civilrights.org and Josh Boxerman, policy analyst, at boxerman@civilrights.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
Interim President and CEO



Jesselyn McCurdy
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs