

November 12th, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and esteemed members of the New York Congressional Delegation,

As faith-based and child advocacy organizations from across New York, we write to you today to thank you for your strong leadership in bringing about the American Rescue Plan's transformational expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) – and to implore you to continue to center the needs of New York's marginalized children and families by *making the expanded CTC permanent, fully inclusive of all immigrant children and fully refundable in the final Build Back Better Act*. Additionally, we ask that you support a final version of the Build Back Better Act that *includes paid family and medical leave*.

As you know all too well, even prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, children – particularly children of color and very young children – were the poorest Americans.¹ In our State, nearly 800,000 children – one in every five of the youngest New Yorkers – live in poverty, representing a higher child poverty rate than that of 34 other states.² Unsurprisingly, racial disparities are pervasive in New York's child poverty burden, with Black and Hispanic children more than twice as likely as white children to live in poverty in our State.

For so many New York families who live in or near poverty, the expanded CTC has been a lifeline. The third monthly payment of the expanded CTC reached 60 million children nationwide in September 2021 and kept 3.4 million children out of poverty while continuing to reduce food insufficiency among low-income families.³ Here in New York, families are using their CTC payments to purchase food, manage bills and pay for clothing and other essentials for children.⁴ Now that families have become accustomed to the stability of this monthly income, it would be unconscionable to take it away from them. If made permanent, the expanded child tax credit is estimated to reduce New York's child poverty rate by over 36 percent, cut child poverty nearly in half nationally and reduce racial disparities in child poverty.⁵ *Failing to make the expanded CTC permanent threatens to reverse these early gains in reducing child poverty and narrowing racial and economic inequities.*

While the one-year extension of the expanded Child Tax Credit and permanent full refundability included in President Biden's Build Back Better framework represents a critical step towards boosting

¹ Children's Defense Fund, "The State of America's Children 2021," March 2021, <https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-State-of-Americas-Children-2021.pdf>.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Detailed Estimates. *Note:* To explore the Children's Defense Fund – New York's county-specific child poverty data profiles, visit <https://cdfny.org/county-profiles/>.

³ Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University, Monthly SPM Poverty for September 2021, October 27, 2021, <https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/news-internal/monthly-poverty-september-2021>.

⁴ Washington University in St. Louis Social Policy Institute, "How are New York families using their Child Tax Credit payments? Evidence from Census Data, September 2021, <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/a/2003/files/2021/09/CTC-One-pager-NY.pdf>.

⁵ Center on Poverty and Social Policy, Columbia University, "A Poverty Reduction Analysis of the American Family Act," January 25, 2021, <https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/s/Poverty-Reduction-Analysis-American-Family-Act-CPSP-2020.pdf>.

family economic stability, *we as a society must do more for our children*. Now more than ever, New York families need predictable and consistent cash support to enable parents and caregivers to care for their children today and plan for the uncertainty of tomorrow. In order for every child to have an equal opportunity for a bright future, we need bold public investments in children and families. *We must thereby hold the line on a permanently expanded and fully refundable Child Tax Credit that is inclusive of all families, regardless of their race, zip code, or immigration status.*

New York is home to the Statue of Liberty upon which the following words are inscribed:

"Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command

...

Cries she with silent lips: 'Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

...

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Child poverty is a moral failure. America is a nation of immigrants. New York is a state of immigrants. The immigrant children of our nation and state are worthy and deserving of access to poverty-fighting supports – including the up to 72,000 New York children without Social Security Numbers who are currently ineligible for the expanded CTC.⁶ We simply cannot afford to play political football with our children's futures, or to leave the fate of the CTC in the hands of an uncertain tomorrow. As the Reverend Dr. Starsky Wilson, President and CEO of the Children's Defense Fund, recently articulated: "We cannot compromise when it comes to the well-being of children and youth. Young people are not a special interest, and they're not a negotiation tactic...Until every child has what they need to thrive, even 'better' is not yet good enough. Our failure to provide universal paid family leave continues to be a glaring stain on this country's promise to care for her people."⁷

Our asks are simple: Now that you have lifted New York families up, please do not let them down. *Our children need – and deserve – a permanently expanded, fully inclusive and fully refundable child tax credit*. New York cannot truly "Build Back Better" without centering and prioritizing the needs of its most marginalized young people. Please hold the line for our children. Secondly, in June 2021, President Biden tweeted: "The United States is the only industrialized country in the world with no national paid family leave policy. It's a disgrace." *As our essential workers maintain formidable resilience in the face of an ongoing global health pandemic, we must act with great urgency in prioritizing their mental relief and financial support by building back better inclusive of a national paid family and medical leave policy.*

Sincerely,

⁶ Center for Migration Studies, "State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates," accessed November 5, 2021, <http://data.cmsny.org/>.

⁷ Children's Defense Fund, "Press Release: Children's Defense Fund Responds to President Biden's Build Back Better Framework," October 29, 2021, <https://www.childrensdefense.org/2021/childrens-defense-fund-responds-to-build-back-better-framework/>.

Children's Defense Fund – New York

Kercena A. Dozier, Executive Director



Bethel Gospel Assembly, Inc.

Carlton T. Brown, Bishop



Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

Jennifer A. March, Executive Director



Daughters4Justice

Dr. Deborah Jenkins, Co-Founder



Educational Alliance

Alan van Capelle, President & CEO



Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.

Regina Baird Haag, Executive Director



Faith in New York

Crystal Walthall, Executive Director



First Corinthian Baptist Church

Rev. Michael A. Walrond, Jr., Senior Pastor



Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO & Executive Director



In Christ New Hope Ministry Inc.

Roger L Breedlove, Pastor



Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing

Marc L. Greenberg, Executive Director



Imani's Quest Ministries

Rev. Yolanda Brown, Pastor



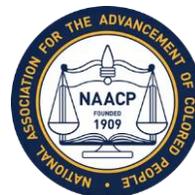
Middle Collegiate Church

Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft, Executive Minister



NAACP New York State Conference

Hazel N. Dukes, President



New Hope Christian Fellowship

Orlando Findlayter, Bishop



New York State Council of Churches

Rev. Peter Cook, Executive Director



Prophetic Whirlwind Ministries

Apostle Onleilove Chika Alston, Founder



Robin Hood

Richard R. Buery, Jr., CEO



RocACTS

Dr. Gayle Harrison, President



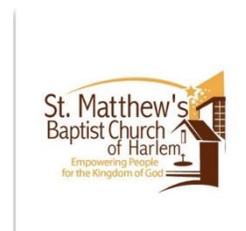
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy

Kate Breslin, President & CEO



St. Matthew's Baptist Church of Harlem

Rev. Dr. Lisa D Jenkins, Senior Pastor



St. Paul's Church in Rye Brook, NY

Jim O'Hanlon, Pastor



The Children's Agenda

Larry Marx, CEO



The Education Trust – New York

Dr. Dia Bryant, Executive Director



The Interfaith Center of New York

Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, Executive Director



The Riverside Church

Rev. Michael Livingston, Senior Minister



Third Presbyterian Church

Tom Gillett, Outreach Chair



Westchester Children's Association

Allison Lake, Executive Director

