



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

CTC: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly **January 18, 2024**

Contact: Michele Kayal, VP Media and Communications,
MicheleK@FirstFocus.org

The Good: The bipartisan Child Tax Credit deal announced earlier this week would lift an estimated 400,000 children out of poverty and make 3 million more children “**less poor**,” according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). The first year of the deal also would deliver more of the credit to 16 million children who get partial or no credit because their family income is too low.

The Bad: This improved CTC would **STILL leave behind the children who need it most: the kids in families with the lowest incomes or no income**. Families currently have to earn at least \$2,500 per year to receive even partial credit. That’s right – perversely, the poorer you are, the less help you receive. Roughly 10 percent of people fall below that threshold, according to a [citation by The Washington Post](#).

The Ugly: Children are struggling now more than at any time in recent history. [Nearly 9 million live in poverty](#) — about 3 million of them thrust back there by the expiration of the 2021 CTC improvements. Gun violence is the number one cause of death in children. Children are facing rising mortality rates, a mental health crisis, runaway absenteeism at school. And yet, some lawmakers have chosen to keep them in what Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro (the godmother of the 2021 CTC improvements) calls “**preventable poverty**.”

This deal is widely regarded as the best opportunity to address child poverty even as extremist lawmakers work to take food, housing, health care and other human basics from our nation’s neediest children. **Just look at the language being used around the deal’s benefits:** It will make some children “less poor.” They’re still poor — just less so. Is that really the best we can do? How is this acceptable in the richest country on earth?

But the ugliest part? This deal may not even pass. Even these small gains might be too much for some lawmakers to give.

In remarks to Congress earlier this year, First Focus on Children President Bruce Lesley wrote:

“Congress should be doing many things to address the myriad problems facing our nation’s children. With respect to the Child Tax Credit, it is well past time to put aside ideological differences, notions of “deservedness” related to adults that impose harm to millions of children, and the decades of failure to fully address the needs and concerns of children and families in this country.”



Photo by Tatiana Syrikova via Pexels.com

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First Focus on Children
1400 I Street NW
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20005
United States

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