



## ***The Kid Angle***

***Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children***

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**Is the CTC popular? Depends on who you ask**

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### **Children and families get ready to tighten their belts — again**

Welcome to 2022. We're grateful it didn't start like last year (just a few more hours left in Jan. 6...), but we are concerned that Congressional inaction has set up children and families for more hardship than in 2021.

**January 14 will mark the first time since summer that U.S. families do NOT receive a monthly payment of up to \$300 for each child.** Since July, these advance payments of the decades-old child tax credit helped families meet monthly financial obligations, a rebate that came in particularly handy for children whose parents lost jobs to the pandemic. But the Senate has backburned the sweeping social agenda that contained the improvements, and with it, the cash advances that could be critical to weathering the new omicron wave.

### **Why?**

Because, according to the emerging narrative (**exhibits [A](#), [B](#), [C](#)**) the improved child tax credit was not “popular” enough. This, we want you to know, is simply untrue. Here's why:

1. Polls that find the public divided over the improved credit have **[focused on process questions](#)** — asking voters whether they favor “permanency”

or “extension.” Voters don’t understand or care about process. **Voters care about having advance payments of an existing tax credit — which helped them meet monthly financial obligations like rent and food — pulled out from under them.** More than just an inconvenience, this change effectively raises taxes on families with children in 2022. Put the question that way to the roughly 90% of U.S. families receiving the credit and you’d get very different answers.

2. **Polling conducted on the eve of the 2020 election found that [registered voters — regardless of party or demographics — supported making the expanded child tax credit permanent by an overwhelming 71-18% majority.](#)** This same poll, a nationwide survey of 2,400 registered voters conducted by Lake Research Partners between Oct. 31 and Nov. 3, found voters support a national target to cut child poverty in half, a goal that the improved CTC moves the country toward.
3. Those opposed to the child tax credit have successfully linked it to party identification. Most of the opposition comes from **Republicans, who, it will be noted, supported Trump’s CTC changes in the 2017 tax bill.**
4. Effective messaging demands repetition and a link to values. **Democrats have inexplicably abandoned promoting the CTC’s near-miraculous ability to slash child poverty.** If not linked to cutting child poverty, what is the moral or emotional value of the CTC?
5. **Ageism, childism, the racial generation gap and intergenerational warfare are at play.** In various polls, younger voters (18-34) overwhelmingly support policies for both children and seniors. In contrast, voters over the age of 65 support policies of importance to senior citizens but their support for children’s issues drops significantly.
6. And, finally, the perennial issue: **Kids don’t vote.** And they don’t have Super PACs.

What comes next? The improved CTC is unlikely to make it as a stand alone bill. **(That’s been [tried already](#)).** The best chance for ensuring that children and families get the support they so desperately need is to include the improvements in the president’s Build Back Better agenda — and to get that bill back into play.

Otherwise, 2022 is already off on the wrong foot.

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