



## ***The Kid Angle***

*Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children*

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### **What's wrong with Romney's Child Tax Credit?**

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#### ***For starters, it isn't aimed at children***

In the silver lining that was pandemic-era children's programs, the United States Congress cut child poverty by roughly 40%. And they achieved most of that with a single tool: The improved Child Tax Credit.

The CTC passed by Congress not only raised the credit amount and distributed it monthly, the improved measure awarded the full credit to the country's lowest-income children **for the first time ever**. This was only one of the critical changes lawmakers made to preserve (dare we say "advance") the health and well-being of our nation's youngest members.

The CTC under the American Rescue Plan — all on its own — **cut monthly child poverty in this country by nearly 30%. A third. 1/3. [Nearly 4 million kids](#)**. And Columbia University analysts estimate that in time the impact could potentially grow to reduce child poverty by as much as 45%. By contrast, the **[plan recently put forward by Utah Republican Sen. Mitt Romney scales back the credit's poverty-cutting power to less than 13% and leaves out the poorest kids](#)**. When negotiations on the CTC resume in earnest, the latest Romney plan should not be the starting point. **Let us count the reasons why:**

#### **The Romney plan:**

1. **Disqualifies grandparents** from being eligible for the CTC (Note: 7% of kids are raised by grandparents or other family members)

2. Dumps eligibility for **kids with immigrant parents**
3. Ends the of head-of-household deduction, **harming single moms** disproportionately
4. **Slashes the Earned Income Tax Credit** for more than one child (perplexing since that harms larger families the most).
5. Creates **devastating inequities**. For instance: The Romney plan adds pregnant women (a good thing!) but **not all pregnant women**. A pregnant woman making \$200,000+ would receive the full Child Tax Credit and could claim part of it four months before their child is due. A lower-income pregnant woman, let's say an adolescent or young adult just starting out, might receive no credit or only a partial credit. In addition, our colleagues at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that families including [10 million children with annual incomes below \\$50,000 would lose roughly \\$800 a year](#), with **Black and Hispanic children disproportionately harmed**.
6. **Compounds the horror of horrible situations**. Under the Romney plan, most pregnant children and adolescents would be disqualified by the measure's work requirements — a situation grotesquely compounded if the child is pregnant by rape or incest.
7. Actually **EXCLUDES children to serve adults** in many cases. For instance, a wealthy pregnant woman would receive the full credit — some of it even before their baby is born — while the nation's lowest-income children would get nothing, at any time.

### **How can we call this a “Child Tax Credit?”**

These provisions raise particular red flags in the post-Dobbs era. For instance, excluding grandparents and other caregivers from eligibility makes no sense when analysts are predicting the [birth of as many as 160,000 additional unwanted children each year](#), a situation that surely will mean **more children being raised by non-parental caregivers**.

And why change the EITC in a way that **cuts support for larger families**, which will surely multiply post-Dobbs? As for **punishing American children for the immigration status of their parents**.... shame, shame, shame, shame.

Sen. Romney actually put forward [a far superior plan in 2021](#), one that would have cut child poverty by 33% and included the nation's poorest children. This original plan focused squarely on the nation's children and what is best for them. The new plan shifts the spotlight to adults and “deservedness,” producing significant drawbacks for children.

It is our strong belief that federal policy should always be governed, first and foremost, by the **best interests of the child**. (Voters agree with us, by the way, by a [margin of 82-10%](#)). When it comes to the Child Tax Credit and all other legislation, we need to make progress for all kids, [not carve out winners and losers](#) based on the status of the adults who care for them.



*Photo by [Valeria Zoncoll](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

### ***In other news...***

#### **Help in crisis now just three digits away: 988**

The country's new national **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline debuts this Saturday, July 16, replacing the previous suicide prevention lifeline phone number with three simple digits: 988**. As states roll out the change, First Focus on Children and other advocates are urging them to design the systems to meet the specific needs of children in crisis and their families, rather than retrofitting the system for them later. To date, 16 states have enacted legislation to implement 988. Of these, **only three — Nevada, Oregon and Washington — have implemented child- or youth-specific planning** provisions identified in their legislation. The Department of Health and Human Services is poised to issue guidance to the states on incorporating the needs of children and youth into their response systems. First Focus on Children believes this guidance is overdue in being made available to states, but we hope it will still be helpful as

remaining states build their crisis lifeline systems. **Among advocates' recommendations for child- and youth-conscious 988 planning:**

- Include **youth and family voices** in the planning process
- Implement [mobile response and stabilization services](#), which deliver immediate aid to children without engaging law enforcement
- **Incorporate existing youth crisis lines**, which are staffed by trained youth, into 988 services
- Require **pediatric training for 988 and mobile crisis staff** and offer pediatric providers and services

For more information on these recommendations, [visit our fact sheet](#).

## The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. While some areas may be currently able to connect to the Lifeline by dialing 988, this dialing code will be available to everyone across the United States starting on July 16, 2022.



## House Budget Committee tackles child care investment

The House Budget Committee will hear testimony Wednesday, July 20, on the **powerful impact federal investment in early childhood has on children, families and the nation's economy**. The Committee's pre-hearing [report outlines the benefits of targeted tax credits, accessible high-quality pre-K, good nutrition and other factors](#). Among the panel's high-profile experts will be UC Berkeley professor of economics Hilary Hoynes, early childhood expert Maureen Black of RTI International and Rasheed Malik, early childhood policy director at the Center for American Progress. **Wed., July 20, 10:30amET, 210 Cannon HOB and Zoom. [Livestream here](#) and on [Twitter](#).**

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