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An Acceptable Tax Deal Should Help All Working Families without Punishing Taxpaying Immigrants

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As the year draws to a close, lawmakers in Washington are hoping to strike a deal that would extend expiring tax credits for businesses and for millions of hardworking families, many of them Latino. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are among the most effective tools to fight poverty, promote employment and bolster the overall economy. But the eligibility of millions of immigrant taxpayers—the majority of whom are Latino and have U.S.-citizen children—is being threatened in an unjustified claim that it will reduce fraud. Today, Sen. Robert Menendez (D–NJ) joined NCLR (National Council of La Raza) and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) to urge Congress to move forward with a tax deal that includes credits for working families, without wrongly restricting access to millions of working immigrants who pay their taxes.

“We must not mince words when it comes to the extension of tax credits that directly impact the economic welfare of our families and our national economy,” said Menendez, senior member of the Senate Finance Committee. “And although we know that the issues that hurt immigrants are unfortunately part of the Republican agenda in the ongoing negotiations, a final agreement should not include elements specifically designed against our community. I have seen and I have fought against these attacks for several years, both in public and in private, and now I’m doing everything possible to ensure that immigrants and all working families have access to the CTC and EITC. A vote against these important family credits is a vote to increase the taxes on millions of working immigrant families.”

If Congress fails to prevent these successful policies from expiring, more than 16 million American workers would fall deeper into poverty. Nearly five million Latino working families stand to lose an average of \$1,000 each. A [national poll](#) conducted by NCLR in November found overwhelming support among Latino voters for Congress to act. Ninety-one percent of respondents said it is important for Congress to support tax credits for working families, while 66 percent said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who lowered taxes for businesses but did not help working families.

“The EITC and CTC, first and foremost, reward hard work. Millions of American families deserve this hard-earned income boost, which many rely on to pay for basic expenses such as school supplies and child care,” said Clarissa Martínez-De-Castro, Deputy Vice President of the

Office of Research, Advocacy and Legislation at NCLR. “Renewing the improvements that were made to these programs is sensible policy that strengthens our workforce.”

“It is great news that Congress may be extending these important antipoverty programs for working families but they should not do so on the backs of taxpaying immigrants also working hard to make ends meet. Taking away low-income immigrants’ means to survive is an unnecessary and inappropriate solution. It is a direct attack on our communities,” said Marielena Hincapié, Executive Director of the National Immigration Law Center. “The conservative legislators’ proposals scapegoat our communities and serve as yet another reminder to Latino voters that some in Washington want to deny our families access to the economic tools we all need to succeed.”

The majority of participants also responded unfavorably to elected officials using immigrant families as bargaining chips. Seventy-one percent said they would be less likely vote for a candidate who supports cutting tax credits for taxpaying immigrants who are not yet citizens. However, some lawmakers are proposing exactly that course of action. Under the guise of improving “integrity” in the programs, numerous proposals are being floated on Capitol Hill that would deny immigrant tax filers as well as those who have received deferred action access to the CTC or EITC. Preventing immigrants from filing taxes and requiring a Social Security number for parents or children to claim the CTC would severely punish immigrant tax filers by taking \$9 billion out of the pockets of hardworking, mostly poor immigrants who are raising families in the United States.

NCLR—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. For more information on NCLR, please visit www.nclr.org or follow along on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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