



NETWORK CONNECTION

THIRD QUARTER 2019



AN ECONOMY OF INCLUSION
WORKING FOR POLICIES THAT REFLECT OUR VALUES



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Sisters demonstrate how U.S. tax policy increases economic inequality at the Pasadena Town Hall for Tax Justice during the 2018 Nuns on the Bus trip. Photo by: Colleen Ross, NETWORK Lobby

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Third Quarter—Vol. 47, No. 3, NETWORK Connection ISSN 0199-5723. Published quarterly by NETWORK, phone: 202-347-9797, fax: 202-347-9864, email: connection@networklobby.org, www.networklobby.org. Annual dues: \$50/\$60 international.

Postmaster: Send address changes to NETWORK, 820 First Street NE, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20002-8065.

We Are Truly One Body

Economic Interdependence Shows the Depth of Our Connection to One Another

BY SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

One of my favorite spiritual realities is that we are the body of God. All of us together make up the image of the Divine. We have different parts to play in the body, but we all serve in order to allow the other parts to function fully.

This image came to mind as I was at one of our rural roundtable listening sessions. Folks were talking about the challenge of being a farmer and only getting income once or twice a year when you sell your crops. This means that (unless you have other income) you have to stretch that money across the whole year. Dairy farmers around the table spoke up and said that in the dairy business they are paid more regularly because they sell their milk every day. For them, however, the challenge is that milk prices are so low that it is almost impossible to stay in business. The way the dairy farmers talked, it was faithfulness to their cattle that kept them going.

These farmers told us one of the big deterrents to family farms is the fact that many bills, like healthcare premiums, come on a monthly basis. This system is designed to work for salaried employees but not farmers.

I began to see that other businesses in farming communities then have different business models depending on how well the crops do on the market or the price of milk. Farming communities live, by necessity, in an interdependent economy of which I as a life-long “city person” was unaware.

As the conversation continued, I realized the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is an essential boost to rural economies. When families receive their tax returns, they can make purchases at local businesses that they would not otherwise be able to afford. This boosts the local economy and supports families.

It is this interrelationship that makes me know the living, breathing reality that we are one body. We are profoundly connected both economically and socially. The Earned Income Tax Credit, and the ways we organize our tax code, are one specific instance where we can see this interdependence.

This same reality of community interdependence exists in our nation’s urban areas, but it is more difficult to see because of the size of the economy. In areas with larger economies, the EITC’s impact for the families that receive it is significant, but businesses are less likely to notice a distinct impact. Still, the impact is there.

However, while the Earned Income Tax Credit aims to supplement low-wage earners’ income and succeeds on many counts, there are some gaping holes in the system. The EITC as it is currently designed leaves out childless adults as well as people who earn less than \$3,000 in a year from salaried employment. Those who fall into these categories and are left out are struggling mightily to thrive and flourish in our nation. AND small businesses in their communities are struggling too. This is how we are “one body” in our nation. We are interconnected.

For this reason, we at NETWORK believe we must expand the Earned Income Tax Credit. Doing so will benefit families and entire communities. The benefit is felt most directly in rural communities, but it is also true in cities and suburban neighborhoods. We are connected in this one body.

Therefore, we are working with partner organizations, Members of Congress, our NETWORK members, and advocates across the country to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax credits to benefit families who are working but still not getting by in our nation. We are advocating for a tax policy that does a better job of helping the households and communities most in need. The one, interconnected body of our nation requires everyone to flourish for our nation to succeed. Federal policy should ensure that all of our families can live in dignity. Expanding the EITC would be one more step towards meeting our communal duty to our neighbors.

This communal duty is at the heart of the Gospel call to love one another. Oh one body, let us respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers and make this change for the common good. ☀️



Sister Simone and the Nuns on the Bus visit Farmer Foodshare in Durham, North Carolina during the 2018 Nuns on the Bus trip.

Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"It's not about deporting criminals; it's about deporting regular people who have tried to play by their rules, only to have the rules change, and then they call us criminals."

Clive Thompson explaining the decision to enter sanctuary with his wife after receiving deportation notices to Rewire News

"Justice demands that every member of our human family is protected from hate and discrimination."

Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS advocating in support of the Equality Act

"Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage is lower than it was 50 years ago."

Helaine Olen marking the longest gap ever between minimum wage increases in U.S. history in the Washington Post

"Thinking especially of all the detained fathers currently separated from their families by ICE on this day"

Tweet from the UndocuBlack Network (@UndocuBlack) on Father's Day 2019

"We will be judged by how we have cared for the sick, how we fed the hungry, how we have sheltered the homeless, how we have welcomed the stranger."

Rev. Traci Blackmon at Moral Witness Wednesday organized by the Poor People's Campaign outside the White House

"They love the farming, but they know they cannot raise a family."

Pastor Gail Adamoschek of River of Jubilee Church, participating in a NETWORK Rural Roundtable in Amsterdam, New York

"Every day we wait, every day we don't address it, is a day that a mother could possibly die"

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) quoted in a Huffington Post article on the need to address maternal mortality

"Living in faith — tried, tested, hard-won faith — is so much better than living in fear."

A recording of Rachel Held Evans included in The Daily podcast following Evans's death

"A faithful budget would invest in healthcare and nutrition, housing, and a fair and accurate 2020 Census."

Tralonne Shorter, NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate, writing about the 2020 federal budget in a NETWORK blog

"End the legislative graveyard & fix the DACA crisis President Trump created."

Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) urging the Senate to vote on the Dream and Promise Act after it passed in the House

"When moms are shortchanged on their paychecks, entire families suffer."

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Executive Director and CEO of MomsRising, calls on the U.S. Senate to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act

"God bless the nuns — thank God for the nuns."

Speaker Nancy Pelosi describing the passage of the Affordable Care Act while accepting the JFK Profiles in Courage Award

"Despair is not an option."

Sister Christine Schenk, CSJ writing about the need for church reform in light of new scandals in National Catholic Reporter

Strengthen Working Family Tax Credits to Reduce Poverty and Expand Opportunity

BY CHUCK MARR, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Many people across the country have stories about how a little-known part of the tax code—the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit — helped support their families and get ahead.

“As a single mother and new graduate, I count on the Child Tax Credit tremendously,” Travis from Tennessee told the national advocacy organization MomsRising. “I am typically in the category of the ‘working poor,’ meaning I don’t make enough money to live above the poverty line, but I don’t qualify for state aid. This makes it extremely hard to afford anything other than our base line bills and groceries for the month. If something goes wrong with my car or an appliance in my house, it causes me panic attacks because I don’t [know] where I’ll get the money from. . . . [T]he Earned Income Tax Credit also provides my daughter and me with funds that allow me to pay for opportunities for her that would otherwise be unavailable.”

Many low-income working families like Travis’s struggle to get by, as their costs have risen faster than their wages over the last several decades. Policymakers can help by strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). These two highly successful federal tax credits lift millions of people out of poverty and give working people and children a better shot to get ahead, both now and over the long term.

Almost 26 million working families and individuals in every state received the EITC during the 2016 tax year.

Improving the EITC and Child Tax Credit — through changes like those in the Working Families Tax Relief Act, recently introduced in the Senate — should be a key part of an agenda to reduce income inequality and boost working people’s wages.



Courtesy of CBPP

The EITC, enacted under the Ford administration in 1975, has long enjoyed bipartisan support. President Reagan called the 1986 tax reform bill, which substantially expanded the credit, “the best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure to come out of Congress.” President Clinton signed another major EITC expansion in 1993, while Presidents Bush and Obama enacted improvements as well.

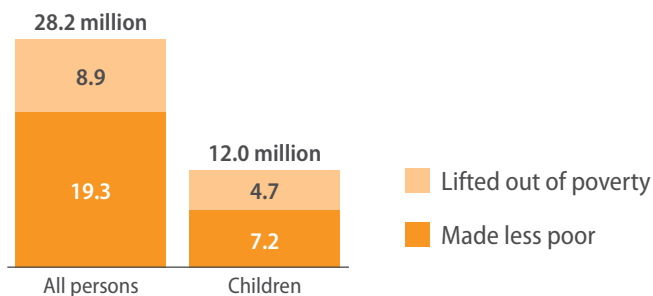
Working people receive the EITC starting with their first dollar of earned income; the credit grows with their earnings until reaching a maximum level and then phases out at higher income levels. The EITC offsets federal payroll and income taxes and boosts the incomes of people who work hard but earn little. Families across the United States use EITC refunds to pay for necessities, repair homes, maintain vehicles they need to get to work, or get additional education or training to boost their employability and earning power.

“Stephanie in Missouri, for example, explains: “I am a single working mom of four. My income is low, but I’m proud to support my family, running my own business from home which allows me to be here for my kids. Without the EITC my income would not be enough to cover our basic necessities, like food, housing and utilities.”

continued on page 6

Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit Have Powerful Antipoverty Impact

Millions of persons lifted out of poverty or made less poor (using Supplemental Poverty Measure) by EITC and CTC, 2016

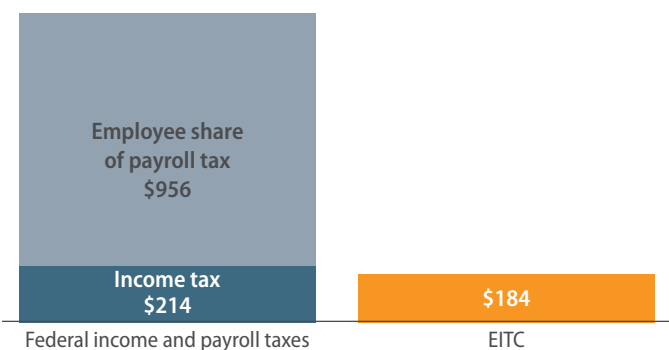


Note: Unlike the Census Bureau's official poverty measure, the SPM counts the effect of government benefit programs and tax credits.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau's March 2017 Current Population Survey and 2016 SPM public use file.

EITC Does Little to Offset Federal Taxes for Low-Income Childless Workers

Single childless adult with poverty-line earnings of \$12,494, 2016.



Note: Estimated poverty line of \$12,494 is produced using the 2015 Census poverty line, adjusted for inflation as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. Economists generally concur that workers also pay the employer share of payroll taxes in the form of lower wages.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: cbpp.org

The extra money that people get from the EITC also helps them achieve more financial stability. The EITC lifted about 5.8 million people out of poverty in 2016, including about 3 million children.

The Child Tax Credit, enacted in 1997 and expanded with bipartisan support since 2001, helps working families offset the cost of raising children. It's worth up to \$2,000 per child under age 17 and is partially available to low wage working parents.

The CTC lifted roughly 2.8 million people out of poverty in 2017, including about 1.6 million children, and lessened poverty for another 13.1 million people, including 6.7 million children.¹

Congress Can Improve the EITC and Child Tax Credit

Despite their success, both the EITC and the Child Tax Credit have shortcomings that policymakers should address in order to target more assistance to those who need it most. The EITC for working people not raising children in the home is extremely small — too small even to fully offset federal taxes for workers at the poverty line.² A childless adult earning poverty-level wages of \$13,340 as a cashier, for example, owes \$1,135 in federal income and payroll taxes and receives an EITC of just \$172. As a result, this person is one of the over 5 million low-wage childless working people whom the federal tax code taxes into, or deeper into, poverty.³

Beyond a threshold of \$2,500 of earnings, the Child Tax Credit amounts to 15 cents on each additional dollar earned. This means the poorest children qualify for a very small credit or none at all, even though they are the children who need it most and for whom it would have the largest impact.

Unfortunately, when policymakers made major changes to the tax code most recently in 2017, they largely ignored the opportunity to raise living standards for low- and moderate-income people. The 2017 tax law was heavily tilted toward the wealthiest households and profitable corporations instead of working families. And even its highly touted increase in the CTC provided zero or only a token amount (ranging from \$1 to \$75) to 11 million children in low-income working families because their incomes were too low.

A landmark bill in Congress offers a promising path forward. The Working Families Tax Relief Act, introduced in the Senate by Senators Sherrod Brown, Michael Bennet, Richard Durbin, and Ron Wyden with more than 40 cosponsors, would significantly strengthen the EITC and CTC. These expansions would make 46 million households more financially secure and benefit 114 million people — including 49 million children. Families of all races would benefit, including 24 million white



Courtesy of CBPP

families, 9 million Latino families, 8 million Black families, and 2 million Asian American families.

The bill would build on the EITC's success among families with children, boosting their credit by roughly 25%. And it would substantially improve the credit for low-wage working people without children at home. It would raise their maximum credit (from roughly \$530 to \$2,100), raise the income limit to qualify for the credit (from about \$16,000 for a single individual to about \$25,000), and expand the age range of workers eligible for the credit (from 25–64 to 19–67). The above-mentioned cashier would see her EITC rise from \$172 to \$1,797, lifting her \$662 above the poverty line.

The bill would also make big improvements in the Child Tax Credit. As discussed above, the current credit partly or entirely leaves out many poor families with children because they earn too little. The bill would make the CTC available to all poor families — and not dependent on earnings — and expand the credit for children under age 6. Almost all low- and middle-income families with children would receive a \$2,000 Child Tax Credit for each child age 6 or older and \$3,000 per child under 6.

The larger tax credit for young children would help respond to the special economic challenges that families with young children can face. Parents in these families tend to have lower wages because they are often less advanced in their careers, and the high cost of child care for young children can force many parents to choose between paying that expense or getting by on just one income.

To better target the Child Tax Credit to families who need it most, the bill would also begin phasing the credit down for married couples with incomes over \$200,000 (compared to \$400,000 under current law) and single parents with incomes over \$150,000 (compared to \$200,000).

Putting its EITC and CTC expansions together, the bill would make a substantial difference for low- and moderate-in-

come working families. A single mother of two earning \$20,000 would get a \$3,700 increase, for example, while a married couple with two young kids making \$45,000 would get a \$3,500 increase. The bill would cut child poverty by 28%, lifting 3.1 million children out of poverty and making another 7.7 million children less poor.

The bill would also have lasting benefits for children, helping not only them but our country as a whole. Studies show that kids in low-income families that receive added income from working-family tax credits like the EITC and Child Tax Credit do better in school and are likelier to attend college. They also are likelier to earn more as adults due to their higher skills and more years of education. And, kids whose families receive working-family tax credits are likelier to avoid the early onset of illnesses associated with child poverty, further boosting their earnings ability.

“Both the EITC and Child Tax Credit have made a huge difference for our family and have been critically important to our financial stability as parents of young children,” Kathleen from Utah explains.

That's a key message for policymakers as they debate ways to reduce inequality and restructure the 2017 tax law to expand opportunity for low-wage working families. Strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit would advance both of those goals.

Sources:

1. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/policy-basics-the-earned-income-tax-credit>
2. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/strengthening-the-eitc-for-childless-workers-would-promote-work-and-reduce>
3. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/childless-adults-are-lone-group-taxed-into-poverty>

Chuck Marr is the Director of Federal Tax Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) is a nonpartisan research and policy institute founded in 1981 to analyze federal budget priorities, with a particular focus on how budget choices affect low-income Americans. CBPP pursues both federal and state policies designed to reduce poverty and inequality and to restore fiscal responsibility in equitable and effective ways. Learn more at www.cbpp.org.

Special thanks to MomsRising for sharing the stories from people and families across the country who receive the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.



Putting More Money in the Pockets of Working Families

BY U.S. SENATOR SHERROD BROWN

People in the United States are working harder than ever before to make ends meet. But the cost of everything — from childcare to prescription drugs to a college education — is up, while wages are largely flat.

That's why I led my colleagues to introduce the Working Families Tax Relief Act. This plan will cut taxes for workers and families by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

Research has shown that these credits are two of the most effective tools we have to put money in the pockets of working people, pull children out of poverty, and help families with the cost of living. EITC and Child Tax Credit are simple to administer, and they give families in the United States what they need most — extra dollars. We worked to expand the EITC and make it permanent in 2015, and the following year, it lifted nearly six million people out of poverty.

As Americans filed their taxes this spring, more and more people saw President Trump and Congressional Republicans' tax scam for what it really is — a handout to millionaires and billionaires at the expense of working families. Many families didn't get the large refunds they were expecting, and some even owed money. Our plan is targeted directly to working families, and would boost the incomes for more than 114 million Americans.

And while the President's tax scam left out 26 million children, our bill would fix that by making the Child Tax Credit fully refundable for the first time, helping to lift three million children out of poverty. The plan would also create a new Young Child Tax Credit, to provide families of very young children extra help when they need it most. Families would receive an extra \$1,000 for each child under age five, up to \$3,000 per family, because research shows investing in children in these formative years can set children up for success later in life.

The Working Families Tax Relief Act would also make sure workers can no longer be taxed into poverty. Right now, five million young workers without children are taxed into or taxed deeper into poverty. These are young people working hard at jobs that don't pay high wages — they're too young to qualify for the EITC under current law, but they still get hit by state and

local taxes, and those taxes can push them below the poverty line. Our plan raises the maximum credit for these workers, and expands the age range to cover all workers from age 19 to 67.

Our plan would also stop families from having to turn to predatory payday lenders in an emergency, by allowing people to draw a \$500 advance on their EITC. Right now, 4 in 10 Americans say they couldn't afford an emergency expense of \$400 without borrowing money. And we know what so often happens to those families — they're forced to turn to payday lenders or car title lenders, and become trapped in a cycle of debt. A one-time, interest-free advance on people's EITC payment would give families a real alternative. The plan would also establish minimum competency standards for paid tax preparers, to give families better peace of mind that they won't get ripped off during tax season.

Right now, Democrats are united around this plan, and we want Republicans to join us.

Many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have said over and over that they want to cut taxes for working Americans and support families. We have a plan to do it, and put more money in the pockets of millions of families.



Senator Sherrod Brown has represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate since 2007. Prior to serving in the Senate, he served as a U.S. Representative for Ohio's 13th District.

Senator Sherrod Brown represents the state of Ohio and is a champion of middle-class families. Senator Brown supports workers and just trade policies and is proud of his work to help pass the historic health care law that made health insurance more affordable and accessible for American families. Informed by his faith as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Senator Brown is committed to social and economic justice.



Understanding VAWA's Importance for Native Communities

By Laurel J. Robertson, Odawa Tribal Member

For a long time, I was really unaware of the severity of Indigenous missing, murdered, and abused women and girls in the USA and Canada until it hit close to home.

I was aware and appalled, as most are, by the large number of women and girls of all races who are affected by this tragedy. Then, my husband and I were invited to a walk in support of these women and girls on a nearby reservation. Under a canopy, pictures and stories were displayed of a few of the victims, both survivors and murdered. But most disturbing was the fact that most of these cases were unresolved. A short time after that, a friend of ours' granddaughter was raped, beaten, and killed. Because our friend is a well-known and famous person, the killers were finally apprehended. But for average Indigenous families, the prospect of finalization and justice for their loved ones is not as certain.

So I started to study and read what I could find on the subject. As it stands, almost every Native woman will experience violence: 8 in 10 Native women will be raped, stalked, or abused in the course of a lifetime. Prosecuting these crimes is difficult. The vast majority (96%) of crimes against Native victims are committed by non-Natives. Due to a complex web of federal laws and statutes, tribes have long been unable to prosecute non-Natives who commit their crimes on tribal land.

The 2013 Violence Against Women Act reauthorization changed that — to some extent — by restoring tribal jurisdic-

tion over non-Native perpetrators of domestic violence and dating violence. However, the 2013 bill excluded tribes in Alaska and Maine from this expanded jurisdiction and excludes non-domestic violence related crimes from tribal jurisdiction including child abuse, sex trafficking, rape, or murder.

I can go on with the statistics and numbers, but my emotions start to get involved. Tribal nations must also have the ability to advocate for their citizens living in urban areas. This courtesy is extended to all other sovereign nations. When a citizen is killed while living or traveling outside their nation, the nation is notified of their death and can advocate for their citizen's case. This basic respect must be afforded to tribal nations. Currently, this is not extended, and rarely is a tribe notified or given access to the data regarding their tribal citizens.

All of these facts and numbers are accessible online from the National Congress of American Indians. The emotion is from the real life stories that have been lived and shared with me over the years.

I hope that drawing attention to the violence will help bring change.

Mrs. Laurel J. Robertson is Secretary of the All Nations Veterans Council of Detroit, Treasurer of Turtle Island Dream Keepers of Monroe, Michigan, and a member of the Monroe County Community College Diversity Committee. Her tribal affiliation is Odawa.

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Status

In April 2019, the House of Representatives passed an expanded Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This VAWA reauthorization legislation would strengthen protections and expand access to justice to even more victims of abuse.

Key provisions of the 2019 House VAWA bill include: increased protections for unmarried victims from dating violence, expanded access

to justice for Native victims of all crimes committed by non-Native perpetrators, and finally closing the "boyfriend loophole." This legal glitch fails to extend for dating partners or former partners the prohibition on the purchase or possession of guns that is enforced for domestic abusers who are (or were) married, living with, or co-parents with the victim of abuse.

Unfortunately, partisan politics in the Senate has stalled further legislative action for this expanded VAWA reauthorization, placing victims in undue danger.



This picture represents the faceless and nameless Native people who are victims of violence.



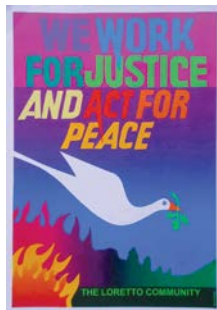
The Loretto Community Works to Mend the Gaps

By Alice Kitchen, Loretto Co-member

Recently, the Loretto Community went through a period of dialogue and discernment about how we can mend the gaps within our sphere of influence. Our considerations were guided by NETWORK's 21st Century Poverty guide. Sisters and Co-members of the Loretto Community gathered in 19 community groups from California to New York. The groups discussed raising the hourly pay of low-wage workers to a livable wage. Each group's job was to explore the issues facing low-wage workers in the communities where they live.

We already knew that low-wage workers undergird daily life in our communities. Low-wage workers care for children, staff nursing homes, and keep our airports functioning. Often these women and men have no steady schedule and have little control over their hours. Many work more than one job to get by. Their employers often have no regard for the multiple jobs they are juggling or their childcare needs. In our study, we learned that the cost of housing, transportation, childcare, and utilities far exceed the hourly incomes of most low-wage workers.

The need for these discussion groups emerged from our Loretto Assembly in August 2018. There, the community group in Kansas City put forth a proposal for the whole Loretto Community to hear, consider and vote on. The proposal advocated for Loretto administrators to "review the compensation of all our employees, working toward the goal of providing a living compensation package as nearly as is sustainable with our financial resources."



Attendees from all over the U.S. and two overseas countries participated in the bi-annual Loretto Assembly. Participants were vowed members, Co-members, and Loretto employees, all of whom had previously affirmed the goal of a pay structure for all Loretto employees based on justice as a mission priority.

Last summer's proposal was a spur to move forward on this goal. As a follow-up in January 2019, Loretto leadership approved an \$1.50 an hour pay increase for Loretto Motherhouse and Infirmary employees and a 2% increase for those same employees who had worked 1,000 hours or more in 2018.

The next step in this ongoing process is collecting the thoughts and ideas of all 19 community groups and determining how to take this commitment to the next level. Much of Loretto's social justice work lies in persuading decision-makers to make needed changes in both our living rooms and in the halls of power. We hope, therefore, that we can find ways to change our own community and beyond.

Some Loretto groups have natural allies in their communities where they can team up to support raising wages at either the local or state level. We are following the Raise the Wage Act (H.R. 582) in Congress and sending out alerts to call our Representatives in support of the bill.

This is all about living our Loretto mantra: We work for justice and act for peace.

Alice Kitchen is a Loretto Co-member as well as a NETWORK Board member. She is based in Kansas City, Missouri.

Loretto Assembly participants express their approval of one of several proposals discussed during the Assembly proceedings. Photo by Ruth Routten





An Invitation to Raise Names for New NETWORK Board Members

NETWORK seeks two Board members to join the NETWORK Lobby and NETWORK Advocates Boards in 2020. We are inviting all NETWORK members to participate wholeheartedly in a “name-raising” process to help identify potential candidates.

To learn more about this name-raising process — or if you know someone, including yourself, who would excel in the role described below — visit www.networklobby.org/nameraising no later than September 1, 2019. (Earlier responses are appreciated.)

In 2020, the Boards are seeking people with one or more of these areas of expertise:

- ✓ **Development/Philanthropy:** fundraising strategy, connections, ability to raise money; and/or
- ✓ **Finance/Governance:** Board experience, nonprofit / business / financial management, budgeting, accounting

In addition, the Boards are actively seeking people of color to join the Boards. NETWORK is committed to having diverse voices on its Boards and believes the Boards should reflect diversity of race and ethnic heritage; economic background; ministry or occupation; geography; age; affiliation (or not) with a community of women religious; and personal or professional skills.

NETWORK is open to all who share our passion for justice; therefore, **raising the names of Catholics and non-Catholics is welcome.** We are seeking creative and strategic thinkers committed to the mission of NETWORK. Experience working with congregations of women religious; working with or having connections to communities of color or social movements; and/or experience working in low-income communities is a plus.

Please take time to prayerfully consider people whom you believe would be an asset to the NETWORK Boards. Speak to those persons who come to mind and let them know you are raising their names as possible candidates for a position on the Boards. Finally, complete the name-raising form at www.networklobby.org/nameraising no later than September 1, 2019.

The NETWORK Boards are grateful for the gifts of time and discernment you offer on behalf of this endeavor and are hoping for a robust response from our membership as we seek to fill these positions on our Boards.

If you have any questions, you can contact us by emailing nameraising@networklobby.org.



Members of the NETWORK Lobby and NETWORK Advocates Boards gather for the 2018 Spring Board meeting in Washington, D.C.



In April, Sister Simone Campbell joined Loretto Community members and Stand Up KC in Kansas City, Missouri at a Fight for \$15 rally. The rally urged newly elected Representative Sharice Davids (KS-03) to cosponsor the Raise the Wage Act.

Healthcare Is a Human Right

Working to Make Prescription Drugs Affordable for All

BY ERIN SUTHERLAND, NETWORK GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION ASSOCIATE

During the 2018 midterm elections, voters across the country made it clear that healthcare was a top priority. As a result, the House of Representatives took action and passed The Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act (H.R. 987) earlier this year.

H.R. 987 was a package that combined seven bills: three bills concerning drug pricing and four bills stabilizing the healthcare marketplace created by the Affordable Care Act. The prescription drug pricing legislation aims to increase generic competition, which will help make critical prescription drugs affordable. The bills designed to strengthen the ACA would increase support for consumers and state marketplaces, and ensure healthcare plans provide full coverage to their beneficiaries.

Unfortunately, this bill has not yet been introduced in the Senate. So we are calling on you — our members — to help us in our advocacy on Capitol Hill. You can do this by amplifying the stories of the many people many whose lives are affected by the astronomical cost of prescription drugs and bringing these stories to your Members of Congress. Here are the stories of three NETWORK members affected by the high price of insulin:



Nick is a 68-year-old retired federal employee who lives in Bellingham, Washington. Nick was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and was put on insulin 15 years ago. Initially, the insulin was covered by health insurance. Over time, the copay kept going up, reaching \$500 for a 2–3 month supply. Nick's pharmacist

in Bellingham encouraged Nick to go to Canada to get his insulin where prices were substantially cheaper, and since Bellingham is only 30 minutes from the Canadian border, he was able to do so. Nick was also lucky that his insurance covered prescriptions outside the United States: the first time he went up to Canada, the total price for the insulin was \$200 for same 2–3 month supply and his insurance covered 80% of the cost, versus \$800 in the United States. For the past three years since then, he goes up to Canada every couple of months to get insulin.

Aleta in Union County, North Carolina has had Type 2 Diabetes since the age of 50 and maintained it with success for many years. As part of her treatment, she was taking a shot two times a day that helps Type 2 Diabetics keep their blood sugar maintained. Her doctor advised Aleta to take Trulicity, a drug that would only be an injection once a week instead of twice a day. On Medicare Part D, Aleta's copay for Trulicity was \$40 a month. Then, later that year, Aleta was told she had reached the limit on how much Medicare would cover of the manufacturer's retail price of medications, and that she would now need to start paying 80% of the manufacturer's retail price. Originally, this amount was \$100 a month, but now, price has risen up to almost \$900 a month. There is a government program for people who earn less than \$40,000 a year that pays for the drug once the limit is reached, but most years, Aleta doesn't qualify with a combination of income from Social Security and investments that puts her and her husband's shared income at \$50,000 a year. At one point, Aleta was experimenting with rationing the injection, which can have severe negative health impacts. Now, she emails her doctor's office and asks for samples or coupons for Trulicity to extend the time that she can access her medication before she hits her limit with Medicare.



Allison of Winchester, New Hampshire is currently being treated for an autoimmune disease and for diabetes. She is charged more than a third of her quarterly income (\$2,100 from SSDI) for medication copays, a whopping \$750 each quarter. For a long time, Allison was not able to afford to take all the medication she needed. Luckily, Allison was able to find Novolin, the long-acting form of insulin at Walmart for \$24.88 a bottle and can afford to take it again.

One of the ways NETWORK collects stories is through the help of our supporters around the country. **Rev. Susan Grant Rosen**, Pastor of The United Church of Winchester in New Hampshire contacted us to share Allison's story and is helping NETWORK collect stories from other faith leaders in her area.

Do you have a story to share, or are you willing to collect others' stories in your community? We want to hear from you! Use the story collection form on the next page and return it in to us in the mail or via email.

Drug Pricing Story Collection Form

Thank you for talking to your family, friends, and neighbors about the challenges they face accessing affordable medicine. The story (or stories) that you collect, along with the stories collected by NETWORK members across the country, will aid in our advocacy efforts.

Together, we urge Congress to regulate the pharmaceutical industry so that no one has to choose between food and medication, or forgo much needed treatment because it is unaffordable.

Reminders

- As you know, personal health and financial situations are very sensitive. If something is unclear, repeat back or ask follow up questions so that you are accurately capturing the person's story. However, you do not need to know the full details of someone's medical history to have a powerful story.
- Explain NETWORK and our advocacy for drug pricing legislation clearly. Tell the person who shares their story that someone from NETWORK will follow up with them to use their story in our advocacy. Have them sign and date the form to indicate their understanding.
- After you collect the story, please scan the story form and email it to Meg Olson, NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization Manager, at molson@networklobby.org. You can also mail it to:

Meg Olson
NETWORK
820 First Street NE Suite 350
Washington, DC 20002

Story Collection Form

PERSON'S NAME: _____ LOCATION (CITY, STATE): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ PHONE NUMBER: _____

AGE (OR APPROXIMATE): _____ RACE (IF COMFORTABLE IDENTIFYING): _____

Brief Bio (e.g., Do they have children? Are they retired? Etc.):

Story Details (Summary):

This segment to be completed by the person whose story is recorded:

I am willing to share my story in the following ways:

- Have a NETWORK lobbyist share my story with my Member of Congress in D.C. Write for NETWORK's blog on www.networklobby.org
- Participate in a lobby visit in-district with my Member of Congress Speak at a local press conference/rally
- Publish my story as an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor in local paper

I understand that my information will be shared with NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice in Washington D.C., and someone on their staff will be following up with me.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Dream and Promise Act Passes House, Community Health Centers Face a Loss of Funding

*An update from D.C. on key votes held during the past quarter
and social justice issues on the horizon*



Key Vote: Immigration

On June 4, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act. This long-awaited legislation would provide protection from deportation and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, Temporary Protective Status (TPS) holders, and Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) recipients. This bill's successful passage was a victory for the immigrant community and organizers. NETWORK supported and advocated for this crucial immigration legislation because we know the fear and uncertainty immigrants face, and the frustrating reality that there is no viable pathway to citizenship or lawful permanent residence for these community members right now.

Despite the Dream and Promise Act winning the support of eight Republican House Members, it is unlikely that Republican leadership will bring this legislation up for a vote in the Senate. By not voting on this legislation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell leaves Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients vulnerable to action by the Trump administration and the courts. We will continue to work with our immigrant partners to urge the Senate to pass this bill. Dreamers, TPS holders, and DED recipients are valued members of our communities with inherent dignity and must be granted a pathway to citizenship.



On the Horizon: Healthcare Funding

Community Health Centers (CHCs) across the country help mend the gaps in access to health care and provide high-quality, affordable health care to all, regardless of their ability to pay. Community Health Centers provide health coverage for those our faith calls us to prioritize: senior citizens, children and adults experiencing poverty, people with disabilities, and those in medically underserved areas. In 2017, federally-funded health centers operated 11,000 service delivery locations nationwide, caring for 27.2 million patients and employing 223,840 people. Without congressional action, however, \$4 billion of funding for the Community Health Centers Fund will expire on September 30, 2019.

Community Health Centers are important assets to health equity; they address underlying social determinants of health and are often based in medically underserved communities. We cannot let this critical funding for CHCs run out. NETWORK supports several pieces of legislation in the House and Senate that would renew existing funding levels or increase CHC funding over time. We are working with our partners and other advocates to ensure Community Health Centers get the resources they need to continue providing quality, affordable healthcare in our nation.



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

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- Jerry Zurek

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Building a Legacy of Justice

When you envision how our country can promote justice and dignity for all through the next 40, 50, or 100 years... What do you hope it will look like?

You may not realize the game-changing impact that “planned gifts” can have for the future of our justice movement—but making a plan today can make an enormous difference for what we can achieve decades from now.

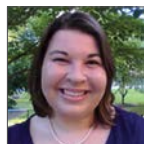
By investing in our justice movement with “planned gifts” — made through a will, trust, life insurance plan, retirement plan or other vehicle, you can help future generations fulfill our radical dreams for justice.

Creating a *legacy* of justice with NETWORK continues the generosity you have shown during your lifetime, and makes a substantial, enduring contribution to the causes that are close to your heart. A legacy gift also helps ensure the stability of NETWORK’s future, and the continuation of our long-term efforts toward justice for the generations of justice seekers to come.

Join our *Bread and Roses Society* by including NETWORK in your will, trust, retirement plan, or other form of planned giving.

I’m available if you have any questions or to help with your reflection and planning for the future. Asking for information does not obligate you to make a gift, and I will hold your inquiry in confidence. You may also visit www.networklobby.org/waystogive/plannedgiving for more information.

Thank you for joining us in envisioning — and acting for — a just society.



Maggie Brevig is NETWORK’s Development & Membership manager. You can reach Maggie at mbrevig@networklobby.org or 202-601-7864.

NETWORK... *then and now*



1979 NETWORK representatives meet with Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont.



2019 NETWORK lobbyists meet with Representative Angie Craig of Minnesota's Second District.

