



July 14, 2015

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Chair
Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sander M. Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
1106 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hatch, Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Wyden, and Ranking Member Levin:

We urge you to prioritize programs that reduce poverty, promote work, and create opportunity for vulnerable workers and their families in tax legislation that you advance. Recent temporary improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be made permanent, and improvements should be considered to the EITC that would enhance its antipoverty, pro-family aspects.

Healthy and stable families are necessary for a flourishing society, and decent work at just wages is critical to family formation and stability. Saint John Paul II notes, "It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principle object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly..." (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 49). The economy is still failing to create a sufficient amount of decent jobs, and too many of the jobs that exist do not pay just wages. As a result, workers struggle to make ends meet, child poverty remains unacceptably high, and family formation and stability have suffered.

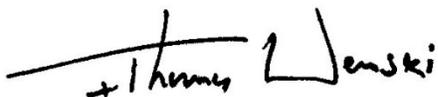
Our organizations have long supported the EITC and refundable CTC because these policies bridge this critical gap between the failures of the economy and the needs of the family, and are also very effective antipoverty tools. In fact, taken together, in 2013 they reduced child poverty by over six percent. Approximately eight million children will be pushed into (or deeper into) poverty and many dual-income families will once again face a marriage penalty, if the improvements expire. Without permanent extension, some of the lowest-income working families, as well as those with three or more children, will lose significant assistance. Congress must not allow this to happen.

We also encourage you to consider changes to eligibility and benefit level that would enhance the EITC for low-income workers without (or without custody of) children. Improving the economic security of these workers would also help them form and support a family.

Lastly, we strongly urge you to oppose any effort that would reduce these credits, in whole or in part, for immigrant workers and their families. Denying these workers and their children the basic resources they need strikes against their God-given human dignity.

Thank you for your consideration, and for protecting poor and vulnerable workers and their families.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thomas G. Wenski in black ink.

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski
Archbishop of Miami
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development

Handwritten signature of Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D. in blue ink.

Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
President
Catholic Charities USA

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Finance

Cc: Members of the House Committee on Ways and Means