

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 551

Fully addressing child poverty.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 23, 2023

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. MCGARVEY, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. EVANS, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Ms. TLAIB) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

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## RESOLUTION

Fully addressing child poverty.

Whereas there were over 3,800,000 children living in poverty in the United States in 2021, the lowest child poverty rate on record and a 46-percent reduction from 2020;

Whereas for the first time on record, children in 2021 experienced a lower rate of poverty than adults;

Whereas improvements to the Child Tax Credit passed in the American Rescue Plan Act were largely responsible for the record decline in child poverty in 2021, with the expansions lifting over 2,000,000 children over the poverty threshold and the full Child Tax Credit lifting nearly 3,000,000;

Whereas the expiration of improvements to the Child Tax Credit already has pushed 4,000,000 children back into poverty in January 2022, and caused a 12-percent increase in food insecurity;

Whereas the United States must continue to work to ensure that all eligible families are able to receive the Child Tax Credit that they are owed, including non filer families, immigrant families, and families in Puerto Rico;

Whereas, according to analysis from First Focus on Children, the share of Federal spending on children temporarily increased in 2021 and 2022 due to an influx of pandemic assistance, yet it is likely to see a decrease in the share of Federal spending on children in 2023;

Whereas Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian and Alaska Native children experienced record low-poverty rates in 2021, but still experience significantly higher rates of poverty than their White peers and the injustice of poverty is deeply entwined with the injustice of systemic racism;

Whereas 1.4 percent of children in the United States (over 1 million) were still living in deep poverty in 2021, in households with incomes less than 50 percent of Federal poverty thresholds and who face severe deprivation;

Whereas the Federal poverty thresholds underestimate poverty in the United States, and families with children with incomes well above Federal poverty thresholds continue to experience material hardship and the inability to afford basic needs;

Whereas young children under the age of 3 have the highest rates of poverty, experiencing significant hardship while undergoing critical stages of brain development;

Whereas the United States continues to have a significantly higher rate of child poverty compared to other wealthy nations because the Nation fails to sufficiently invest in children;

Whereas children in immigrant families experience higher rates of poverty than children in nonimmigrant families because they face barriers to accessing antipoverty programs, and increasing both their eligibility and access to benefits would have a significant impact in reducing child poverty;

Whereas children living in Puerto Rico and the other United States territories experience poverty at higher rates than children in the 50 States and District of Columbia because they lack equal access to Federal benefits as part of a long history of racism and discrimination against people living in the territories;

Whereas poverty is linked to material hardship, resulting in children in poverty experiencing hunger and food insecurity, a lack of access to health care, unsafe and unstable shelter, and a lack of other basic needs which lead to children in poverty often having worse physical and mental health, educational, and other outcomes than their wealthier peers;

Whereas children living in poverty and Black and Hispanic children experience higher rates of asthma and lead poisoning compared to their peers due to living in substandard housing and neighborhood conditions that are a product of an environmental legacy of structural racism;

Whereas the National Academy of Sciences finds that when households with children receive cash transfers, parents and caretakers spend it on resources that support their

children’s healthy development, leading to improved physical and behavioral health and educational outcomes for their children and leading these children to earn more as adults;

Whereas, as the United States high rate of child poverty has negative implications for not only the outcomes of individual children living in poverty, but also for society as a whole, costing the United States upward of \$1 trillion a year due to lost economic output, increased health care costs, and more;

Whereas the outbreak of COVID–19 and its economic fallout has had a disproportionately negative impact for the economic security of households with children, especially for households of color and those that were already struggling before the pandemic;

Whereas too often children unjustly come in contact with the child welfare system due to a lack of household sufficient economic supports and youth who age out of the foster care system experience higher levels of poverty, criminal justice involvement, and homelessness than their peers;

Whereas households with children with disabilities and special health care needs are more prone to economic hardship, as the yearly average cost of caring for a child with disabilities ranges from around \$6,000 to \$20,000;

Whereas poverty is inextricably linked to homelessness, with over 1,000,000 students experiencing homelessness in the 2020–2021 school year, yet these issues are often addressed in separate policy silos;

Whereas the United States invests fewer public dollars in early childhood education and care than almost all other developed nations;

Whereas social spending on children has a bigger return on investment for society than social spending for other ages yet the United States continues to underinvest in children; and

Whereas only 21 out of 100 families with children in poverty receive benefits through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, only 1 in 4 eligible families receive Federal housing assistance, only 10 percent of income-eligible infants and toddlers can access early Head Start, only 25 percent of eligible 3- to 5-year-olds can access Head Start, and even with recent increases to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, food insecurity remains high for households with children: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2           (1) desires that no child should experience pov-  
3       erty in the United States and supports the establish-  
4       ment of a national child poverty reduction target to  
5       build the political will needed to make the invest-  
6       ments and policy changes that will end child poverty;

7           (2) recognizes that every child deserves access  
8       to nutritious meals, safe and stable housing, appro-  
9       priate pediatric health care, clean air and drinking  
10      water, and other necessities, and children should not  
11      be denied resources because of the color of their  
12      skin, their household's economic status or zip code,  
13      their health care status, their gender identity and  
14      sexual orientation, or their immigration status;

1           (3) supports making the improvements made in  
2           2021 to the Child Tax Credit permanent, which sig-  
3           nificantly reduced child poverty and narrowed the  
4           poverty gap for Black, Hispanic, and American In-  
5           dian/Alaska Native children;

6           (4) encourages the establishment of a perma-  
7           nent interagency coordinating council to improve do-  
8           mestic and international policymaking for children  
9           housed in the Office of the Department of Health  
10          and Human Services Secretary;

11          (5) recognizes that the United States under-  
12          invests in children and support making additional  
13          Federal investments for children, increasing the  
14          share of Federal spending on children, and address-  
15          ing the budgetary structural disadvantages facing  
16          children's programs;

17          (6) supports access for all children to high-qual-  
18          ity, affordable, and accessible learning opportunities,  
19          including mixed deliver, within child care, pre-K,  
20          Head Start, and Early Head Start in order to ben-  
21          efit children, their families, the early childhood  
22          workforce, and the economy;

23          (7) guarantees accessible, diverse, safe, high-  
24          quality, equitable public education and accessible  
25          education infrastructure from pre-K–12 for all chil-

1       dren, and protects and expands public resources for  
2       students with disabilities; and

3               (8) encourages States, territories, and localities  
4       to enact policies that follow the direction provided by  
5       this resolution.

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