July 11, 2022

Dear Senator:

Your constituents want you to take action to protect them from rising costs. Over the past two months, the Coalition on Human Needs knows of more than 213,460 letters sent and petitions signed by people in its own network. These people have called for help for families with children, the aging and people with disabilities. They have sought investments in child care and home care. They have urged the continuation of Affordable Care Act premium subsidies, and health coverage for over 2 million poor adults denied Medicaid who cannot afford insurance without help. They have called for continuing the expanded Child Tax Credit, which Congress has allowed to expire. They have demanded that the ultra-rich and corporations pay their fair share, to enable us to invest in our people.

We have been dismayed at reports that most forms of help for struggling families and individuals are being excluded from the reconciliation bill now being negotiated. Help is badly needed. About half of people with children reported in June that they had found it somewhat or very difficult to pay their usual household bills in the previous week, according to Census Bureau Household Pulse survey data. For people in households earning less than $35,000 a year, more than 72 percent were finding it similarly difficult to pay their bills, as well as more than half of Hispanics and Black people.

Congress can and should provide some help. Women are being kept out of the labor force because they cannot afford child care. Others are working, but the high cost of child care is making it even harder to pay for other essentials. Press accounts suggest that at this point the reconciliation bill may offer **no help** to families with children. Such a failure would be very short-sighted. Reducing child care costs and paying child care teachers more would boost employment and make it easier for families to meet their basic needs.

Tens of thousands of constituents are calling for protection against impending increases in health insurance costs, and for extending insurance coverage to millions of poor adults. If Congress does not prevent a rise in Affordable Care Act insurance premiums, a single individual earning $30,000 would see an increase of $1,320 in annual premiums. A family of four earning $60,000 would face an increase of $2,650. If Congress does not extend the current level of premium subsidies, in August insurance companies will have to plan their increases, which will then be announced to consumers in October, and will take effect at the end of the year. If Congress does not act, it will make things far worse for millions, including over 3 million who will lose their insurance altogether. Congress can help them, and can help the 2.2 million poor people currently uninsured because the states they live in refuse to cover them through Medicaid.
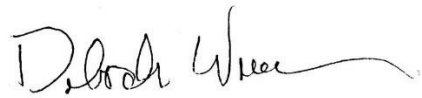
The nation's economy is precarious. When millions of people cannot afford the basics, their health suffers; their children's progress in school suffers; their ability to remain housed suffers. These painful

costs hurt families and the larger economy as well. Your constituents are telling you to reduce the suffering, not to compound it.

It is especially frustrating to hear of efforts to protect multi-millionaires and profitable corporations from paying more of their fair share in taxes, while families struggling to make ends meet seem likely to go without help. Your constituents want to hear that these reports are wrong, and that you will take action to protect those in need. A reconciliation bill that balances needed investments with increased revenues will not be inflationary, and it will prevent an economic downturn.

The many thousands who have written to support investments in health care, child care, home care, housing, and the Child Tax Credit are calling for help that sustains families and builds the economy. If you cannot do all that is needed, at least do some of what is needed. Please do not let them down.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Weinstein,
Executive Director