



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

1825 K Street, NW · Suite 411 · Washington, DC 20006 · 202.223.2532 · Fax 202.223.2538 · www.chn.org

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Celebrating the Senate's Passage of the Inflation Reduction Act

Important steps forward, but unfinished business the nation must address

Statement by Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs:

"The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 will keep health care costs down for millions of Americans, and will make historic progress in protecting us from the ravages of climate change. It will have immediate benefits, and it invests in our future. The Coalition on Human Needs congratulates the Senate leadership for shepherding the bill to its passage in the Senate and celebrates all senators who voted for this important legislation. We look forward to its enactment in the House, and to President Biden's signing the Inflation Reduction Act into law.

"The member organizations of the [Coalition on Human Needs](http://www.chn.org), including human service providers, faith organizations, labor, civil rights, policy experts and other advocates for meeting the needs of people with low incomes, are well aware that the climate and energy provisions that are projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40 percent by 2030 are essential for our nation and the world. Because these emissions are disproportionately hazardous for people with low incomes and communities of color, we strongly support the provisions targeting investments in these communities, including Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which will commit billions of dollars for renewable energy projects and to reduce pollution that has resulted in high levels of cancer, respiratory and other diseases. We know that community advocates and the federal government will have to provide vigilant oversight to ensure these funds reach the low-income communities most needing these investments; we pledge to join in that vigilance.

"The health care provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act will benefit millions of people. By extending the current levels for Affordable Care Act premium tax credits for three years, this legislation will prevent huge increases in insurance costs for the 13 million who purchase ACA marketplace insurance, estimated to be so unaffordable that 3 million people would become uninsured. The average marketplace enrollee will save about \$700 a year on premiums due to this provision. Many will [save a lot more](#): a 45-year old earning \$30,000 will save \$1,320; a 60-year-old couple with a \$75,000 income will save nearly \$16,000; and a family of four with a \$45,000 income will save \$1,928.

"This legislation takes important steps to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. At long last, it initiates drug price negotiations in the Medicare program, and caps insulin prices for 3.3 million Medicare beneficiaries. It caps out-of-pocket costs for medications at \$2,000 for Medicare patients, and extends full subsidies for prescription drug coverage to Medicare part D enrollees with incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty line (up from 135 percent under current law; the new law will provide full subsidies to individuals with incomes up to \$15,510). Further, vaccines will be free to people receiving Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP.

“The Inflation Reduction Act pays for its advances by closing some of the loopholes that have enabled multi-billion-dollar corporations to pay little in taxes. It invests in rebuilding the IRS, to give it the capacity to enforce our tax laws and to provide better taxpayer services. We strongly support the Task Force funded to explore the feasibility of setting up a free-file service, which would be of great benefit to taxpayers with low incomes. The bill taps only a small proportion of the revenues that should be paid by the wealthy and corporations, but it is a start.

“These are important gains. But there is much more that must be done to protect Americans from rising costs and ensure that people with the lowest incomes, disproportionately people of color, share in and can contribute to economic growth. It was a bitter disappointment that [43 Senators](#) voted to remove the \$35 insulin cap from private health plans, as provided in the bill, and because 60 votes were required to retain the provision, they are responsible for denying that help to millions of people with diabetes. We are one nation, and should ensure that poor people nationwide can get health coverage, even if the states they live in refuse to provide them with Medicaid coverage. We applaud Senator Warnock for championing these 2.2 million poor and uninsured people, and pledge to continue to work for their coverage.

“Advocates in CHN’s nationwide network have sent Congress hundreds of thousands of letters seeking urgently needed help and justice for families with children, the aging, people with disabilities, people struggling to afford their rent or to pay for post-secondary education, and immigrants who need legal status and a pathway to citizenship. We are angry that, having seen child poverty reduced by 30 percent because of the Child Tax Credit, the votes have not yet been secured to continue that historic gain, and now millions of children have fallen back into poverty. We are angry that Congress has so far failed people needing care services – child care and home/direct care for the aging and people with disabilities. We need more care workers and to provide them with decent pay.

“Our nation faces the danger of widening gaps between the those with high and low incomes, with millions going without enough food and struggling to pay their rent. The Inflation Reduction Act provides needed help. But there is much unfinished business we must address.”