

I urge North Carolina lawmakers to restore the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for hardworking, low-income families in our state. The EITC is a pro-work, anti-poverty tax credit that supports nearly 1 million families and 1.2 million children in North Carolina each year. Generally applauded by both parties, the EITC encourages work and gives a boost to working families who need it most, especially single working mothers. Overall, the EITC has lifted more Americans—especially children—out of poverty than any other program besides social security. Our state EITC builds on this success, making a positive contribution to the economic health of North Carolina. *Yet, our lawmakers eliminated the EITC this year*; making North Carolina the only state to do so in nearly 30 years.

Many North Carolina lawmakers would like you to believe social programs that boost economic security, like the EITC, undermine work ethic and create a class of people who prefer to depend on government benefits rather than work. This is simply not true. In order to qualify for the EITC you *have* to work. The credit simply allows workers to keep more of what they earn. I know because I am a single working mother who has directly benefited from the EITC.

I graduated college, went on to earn a master's degree from a top university and delayed having children until I was in my thirties. In 2011, I was working full-time, excited to have begun my career, and expecting my first child. Sadly, my son suffered a severe stroke at birth. Doctors told me he may never walk or talk and that in order to have a fighting chance, he would need weekly occupational, physical, speech and developmental therapies. I left my full-time job to care for my son.

To make ends meet, I waited tables in the evening. After 19 months, I decided my son was doing well enough for me to return to work full-time. Just as he needed me to be his therapist and his advocate, he also needed me to gain economic stability and position our family for future opportunities, like owning a home and attending good schools. I wanted these things and much more for my family.

I was fortunate to find a wonderful job, one that would allow me to start to care more fully for my family. But as a single mom with a special needs child, the salary hasn't been near enough for us. For the past three years, I've counted on the EITC. When I was waiting tables, the credit allowed me to keep more of what I earned while I stayed home to care for my son. When I was ready to enter back into the workforce fulltime, it was the EITC that helped me to do so. The tax credit has allowed me to buy much needed household items, to pay for medical care and to save to buy a house – all things that have fed directly back into North Carolina's economy.

Today, my son is thriving and developing on target, I've earned pay increases at my job, and I've purchased my first home. Hands down, the EITC was one of the best investments North Carolina could have made in me, my son, and my community. *NC lawmakers should restore the EITC in the upcoming short session if they'd like to continue to see such success stories in our state.*