

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9323

To establish a task force on child and family economic security and stability
for economic growth.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. EVANS, Ms. CHU, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To establish a task force on child and family economic
security and stability for economic growth.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Lifting American Chil-
5 dren From Poverty Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) According to the United States Census Bu-
9 reau, poverty rates for children under the age of 18
10 have increased to 16.1 percent in 2020, from 14.4

1 percent in 2019. The increase means that now
2 11,600,000 children live in poverty, as opposed to
3 10,000,000 in 2019.

4 (2) Data from the Children’s Defense Fund
5 show that child poverty is an issue that is con-
6 centrated in the American south, with statistics
7 showing that Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mis-
8 sissippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina,
9 Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia have over a
10 quarter of their child population living in poverty.

11 (3) A 2018 Social Work Research report esti-
12 mated that the annual economic costs of child pov-
13 erty was \$36,000,000,000 to \$177,000,000,000,
14 demonstrating how child poverty stalls economic pro-
15 ductivity.

16 (4) Recent data from the Census Bureau Cur-
17 rent Population Survey shows that child poverty in-
18 creased sharply during the COVID–19 pandemic
19 among Black and Latino families. More specifically,
20 child poverty rose by 4.2 percent in Latino families
21 and 2.8 percent in Black families.

22 (5) A report from the Urban Institute dem-
23 onstrates that poverty is closely associated with a
24 lack of educational achievement. For instance, only

1 64 percent of persistently poor children graduate
2 from high school.

3 (6) The problem of child poverty also acutely
4 affects children of color, with 1 in 5 living in pov-
5 erty. Another statistic from the Children’s Defense
6 Fund (2019) shows that 71 percent of children liv-
7 ing in poverty were children of color. Children of
8 color are also 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty
9 than their White counterparts.

10 (7) The Census Bureau Current Population
11 Survey also shows that COVID–19 erased recent
12 gains in the United States toward combating child
13 poverty. In September 2020, child poverty rates
14 were at its lowest since 1973.

15 (8) 3.4 percent of families reported not having
16 enough to eat prepandemic, but during the pandemic
17 that number rose to 12 percent according to Center
18 on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis. Among
19 households with children, that number was 16 per-
20 cent.

21 (9) Data published by the National Public
22 Radio show that the child tax credit cut monthly
23 child poverty rates by 30 percent and kept
24 3,700,000 children out of poverty. In addition, 91
25 percent of low-income families spent the tax credit

1 on basic needs, such as food. The monthly payments
2 cut food insufficiency by 25 percent.

3 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

4 The purpose of this Act is to establish an interagency
5 task force that would create a strategic and comprehensive
6 plan to reduce child poverty, particularly in States with
7 higher poverty rates than the national average of 21 per-
8 cent, by—

9 (1) analyzing the state of child and intergenera-
10 tional poverty and its causes;

11 (2) creating an inventory of all available Fed-
12 eral programs aimed at reducing child poverty; and

13 (3) making recommendations for improving the
14 effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs that
15 reduce child poverty.

16 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON CHILD POVERTY.**

17 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
18 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor, in co-
19 operation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
20 opment, and Secretary of Health and Human Services
21 shall convene a permanent task force on child and family
22 economic security and stability for economic growth (in
23 this Act referred to as the “Task Force”).

1 (b) PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force
2 shall be composed of the following officials (or their des-
3 ignees):

4 (1) The Secretary of Labor, who shall serve as
5 a co-chair of the Task Force.

6 (2) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
7 opment, who shall serve as a co-chair of the Task
8 Force.

9 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
10 ices, who shall serve as a co-chair of the Task Force.

11 (4) The Secretary of the Department of Agri-
12 culture.

13 (5) The Secretary of the Department of Com-
14 merce.

15 (6) The Secretary of Education.

16 (7) The Secretary of the Treasury.

17 (8) The Director of the Bureau of the Census.

18 (9) Such other officials of Federal departments
19 and agencies as the Secretary of Labor, the Sec-
20 retary of Housing and Urban Development, and the
21 Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting
22 jointly, may designate or invite (as appropriate) to
23 serve on the Task Force.

24 (c) ROTATIONAL MEMBERSHIP.—The Secretary of
25 Labor and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-

1 ment and the Secretary of Health and Human Services
2 shall, jointly, nominate the following members to the task
3 force for a period not to exceed 2 years:

4 (1) Two experts on child poverty. The experts
5 nominated under this paragraph must have con-
6 ducted and published a significant body of research
7 on child poverty issues.

8 (2) Two local government representatives from
9 States exhibiting child poverty rates of 22 percent or
10 more who have responsibilities in allocating, distrib-
11 uting or determining eligibility for means-tested ben-
12 efits.

13 (3) Two representatives from nonprofit, com-
14 munity serving organizations working to address
15 child poverty through evidence-based and evidence-
16 informed approaches, which meet the scientifically
17 based methods definition of this Act.

18 (4) Two representatives from State-level labor
19 or health and human services agencies in States with
20 above average child poverty rates.

21 (5) Two representatives from the private sector
22 that have engaged in corporate social responsibility
23 efforts in low-income communities, and who have
24 measured success using metrics that are grounded
25 on scientifically based methods.

1 (6) One representative with expertise in pro-
2 gram evaluation and evidence-based policymaking.

3 (7) One representative with expertise in pro-
4 gram evaluation or implementation with Indian
5 Tribes.

6 (d) TERM.—Except as noted in subsection (c), each
7 member shall be appointed for the life of the Task Force.

8 (e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Task Force shall
9 be filled in the manner in which the original appointment
10 was made.

11 (f) PAY.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
13 graph (2), members of the Task Force shall serve
14 without pay.

15 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall
16 receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of
17 subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions
18 under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United
19 States Code.

20 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of members of the Task
21 Force shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may
22 hold hearings.

23 **SEC. 5. POWERS AND DUTIES.**

24 (a) POWERS OF THE TASK FORCE.—

1 (1) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Task
2 Force may, for the purpose of carrying out this sec-
3 tion, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places,
4 take testimony, and receive evidence as the Task
5 Force considers appropriate. The Task Force may
6 administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses ap-
7 pearing before it.

8 (2) STAKEHOLDERS.—The Secretary of Labor,
9 the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,
10 and the Secretary of Health and Human Services,
11 acting jointly, shall, as appropriate, invite represent-
12 atives of stakeholders to attend meetings of the Task
13 Force, appear before the Task Force, and file state-
14 ments with the Task Force, subject to such require-
15 ments as the Secretaries may determine.

16 (3) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any
17 member or agent of the Task Force may, if author-
18 ized by the Task Force, take any action which the
19 Task Force is authorized to take by this section.

20 (4) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Task
21 Force may secure directly from any department or
22 agency of the United States information necessary
23 to enable it to carry out this section. Upon request
24 of the chairperson of the Task Force, the head of

1 that department or agency shall furnish that infor-
2 mation to the Task Force.

3 (5) **MAILS.**—The Task Force may use the
4 United States mails in the same manner and under
5 the same conditions as other departments and agen-
6 cies of the United States.

7 (6) **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.**—
8 Upon the request of the Task Force, the Adminis-
9 trator of General Services shall provide to the Task
10 Force, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative
11 support services necessary for the Task Force to
12 carry out its responsibilities under this section.

13 (b) **DUTIES.**—The Task Force shall submit to the
14 President and Congress, a strategic plan to reduce child
15 poverty, with emphasis and prioritization of those States
16 experiencing higher than average poverty rates. Such plan
17 shall require the Task Force to—

18 (1) analyze the state of poverty in States expe-
19 riencing higher than average child policy to identify
20 common themes or patterns;

21 (2) create an inventory of existing Federal pro-
22 grams targeting child poverty, and the different fac-
23 tors that lead to it including education, labor, child
24 care and development, health, and housing;

1 (3) identify duplicative programs, gaps in cov-
2 erage or programming, and programs that would
3 benefit from flexibility to blend and braid funding;

4 (4) analyze evidence of the effectiveness of Fed-
5 eral programs in the inventory to promote contin-
6 uous improvement and to assure accountability;

7 (5) provide recommendations, giving priority
8 preference for States exhibiting above average pov-
9 erty, on how to enhance, streamline, scale, improve,
10 expand effective programs or repurpose ineffective
11 programs, through legislative, executive and agency
12 actions, including—

13 (A) new allocations in funding, for the ex-
14 pansion of effective programs;

15 (B) pilot initiatives to improve the per-
16 formance of underperforming Federal programs
17 and initiatives, which shall be prioritized for
18 States experiencing above average child poverty;

19 (C) considering tiered evidence grant mak-
20 ing to develop, implement, replicate, scale, and
21 evaluate evidence-based innovations;

22 (D) considering flexibility and waiver pilots
23 to streamline programming;

24 (E) considering Pay for Success initiatives,
25 when appropriate; and

1 (F) considering repurposing ineffective
2 programs;

3 (6) recommendations must also include rec-
4 ommendations with the intention of creating, en-
5 hancing or improving partnerships among Federal,
6 State, local governments, Indian tribes and the pri-
7 vate, academic, and nonprofit sectors;

8 (7) study the effect of the child tax credit under
9 section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in
10 cutting child poverty and the effect of an expanded
11 and permanent child tax credit;

12 (8) the Task Force must consider approaches
13 that are potentially successful in urban and rural en-
14 vironments;

15 (9) the Task Force must consider the needs of
16 immigrant or limited English language speaking
17 communities, when appropriate;

18 (10) the Task Force must consider the needs of
19 Indian tribes;

20 (11) provide policy guidance and strategies on
21 developing coordinated, coherent, and cohesive cross-
22 agency implementation of actions and budgeting,
23 with an emphasis on data and appropriate metrics;

24 (12) devise comprehensive action plans, includ-
25 ing multiyear and annual priorities;

1 (13) create an accountability mechanism that
2 would allow Congress to monitor progress in States’
3 child poverty rates, and hold States accountable in
4 instances of minimal improvement, stagnant
5 progress or noncompliance; and

6 (14) consider, and adopt mechanisms that are
7 documented, using scientifically based methods, to
8 effectively reduce child poverty, which may include—

9 (A) tiered evidence grantmaking that allo-
10 cates funding based on the level of evidence
11 provided, with smaller awards made to test new
12 and innovative service models and larger awards
13 made to scale service models with stronger evi-
14 dence;

15 (B) increased flexibility to braid and blend
16 funds by allowing for improved coordination,
17 comprehensive multigenerational programming
18 and streamlining of Federal funding; and

19 (C) pay for success initiatives that tie pay-
20 ment for service delivery to the achievement of
21 measurable outcomes.

22 (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—The Task Force
23 shall not consider or adopt strategies that would supplant
24 State or local funds.

1 **SEC. 6. PROVISION OF STAFF, EXPERTS, AND CONSULT-**
2 **ANTS.**

3 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Task Force shall have a direc-
4 tor who shall be appointed by the co-chairs, acting jointly.

5 (b) STAFF APPOINTMENTS.—Subject to rules pre-
6 scribed by the Task Force, the co-chairs, acting jointly,
7 may appoint additional personnel as the co-chairs consider
8 appropriate.

9 (c) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
10 LAWS.—The director and staff of the Task Force shall
11 be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United
12 States Code, governing appointments in the competitive
13 service, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions
14 of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that
15 title relating to classification and General Schedule pay
16 rates.

17 (d) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—Subject to rules
18 prescribed by the Task Force, the co-chairs, acting jointly,
19 may procure temporary and intermittent services under
20 section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

21 (e) STAFF TO FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request
22 of the co-chairs, acting jointly, the head of any Federal
23 department or agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis,
24 any of the personnel of that department or agency to the
25 Task Force to assist it in carrying out its duties under
26 this section.

1 **SEC. 7. INITIAL REPORT.**

2 (a) FIRST REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
3 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Task
4 Force shall provide to the Secretary of Labor and Con-
5 gress a report that includes—

6 (1) a description of the state of poverty in
7 States with child poverty rates of 22 percent or
8 above, including—

9 (A) the workforce participation and em-
10 ployment rates;

11 (B) the percentage of children living in
12 poverty, including counties or school districts
13 with persistent child poverty;

14 (C) an estimate of both the percentage and
15 number of individuals who are self employed;

16 (D) the average reading and mathematics
17 proficiency for elementary school, from third
18 grade and thereafter, and secondary school stu-
19 dents;

20 (E) rates of secondary and post-secondary
21 completion for those experiencing poverty;

22 (F) the number and percentage of individ-
23 uals participating in means-tested benefits pro-
24 grams;

25 (G) an inventory and analysis of all Fed-
26 eral programs and their evidence base aimed at

1 reducing child poverty or any of its casual vari-
2 ables;

3 (H) a summary of existing studies that
4 have used scientifically based research methods
5 to evaluate the effectiveness of Federal pro-
6 grams and recommendations for ensuring the
7 studies are made publicly available online in a
8 user-friendly format; and

9 (I) a plan for legislative, executive, or
10 other actions, to reduce child poverty rates,
11 with a specific focus on jurisdictions with above
12 average child poverty rates, and address any
13 issues identified as a result of the initial report
14 through—

15 (i) increasing enrollment or expansion
16 of Federal programs that have shown to be
17 effective in States with higher than aver-
18 age child poverty rates;

19 (ii) building scholarly literature and
20 evidence, including tiered-evidence ap-
21 proaches, to generate Federal strategies
22 and new funding opportunities for States
23 with higher than average child poverty
24 rates;

1 (iii) encouraging the use of flexibility
2 waiver pilot programs to blend funding and
3 coordinate programming, when appro-
4 priate, which would grant priorities for
5 States with higher than average child pov-
6 erty levels;

7 (iv) providing tax incentives for job
8 creation; and

9 (v) creating economic incentives by—

10 (I) exploring the impact of
11 earned income tax credits;

12 (II) reducing tax burden for fam-
13 ilies of children living in poverty; and

14 (III) providing tax incentives for
15 nonprofit and private sector agents to
16 reduce family and child poverty rates;

17 (2) recommendations for States to engage with
18 local governments, nonprofits, institutions of higher
19 learning, and child poverty experts; and

20 (3) a plan for the creation of an accountability
21 mechanism to ensure that child poverty rates are
22 monitored and States held accountable for progress.

23 (b) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years
24 after the date of enactment of this Act, and biennially
25 thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the President

1 and the Congress, make publicly available, and dissemi-
2 nate a report detailing—

3 (1) the strategies developed to address defi-
4 ciencies noted by the report under subsection (a);

5 (2) in the case of reports subsequent to the
6 first report of this subsection, a description of the
7 accomplishments of the task force since the pre-
8 ceding report;

9 (3) national priorities for addressing child pov-
10 erty, economic growth, and family stability in the
11 United States;

12 (4) updates on Federal research findings and
13 research needs regarding child and family economic
14 security and stability for economic growth;

15 (5) information submitted to the Task Force by
16 Federal departments and agencies for inclusion in
17 the report;

18 (6) information submitted by stakeholders for
19 inclusion in the report; and

20 (7) progress on strategies in the previous report
21 in States with above average child poverty rates in
22 the original report, which will include—

23 (A) updated child poverty rates, including
24 the nominal and percentage value changes from
25 the original report;

1 (B) workforce participation rates among
2 families with children, and among youth;

3 (C) secondary and post-secondary edu-
4 cation enrollment and completion rates; and

5 (D) any other outcome indicators, along
6 with necessary benchmarks, that the Task
7 Force deems as important variables in meas-
8 uring progress towards the eradication of child
9 poverty.

10 **SEC. 8. REQUIRED RECORDS AND PUBLIC NOTICES.**

11 (a) MEETINGS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall meet
13 not less than 3 times in the first year after the es-
14 tablishment of the Task Force, and not less than
15 twice per year thereafter.

16 (2) FIELD HEARINGS.—The Task Force, in ad-
17 dition, shall conduct at least one hearing in any one
18 of the States that meet the poverty rate percentage
19 established in section 4(c)(2).

20 (3) NOTICE.—The Task Force shall—

21 (A) publish in the Federal Register timely
22 notice of each upcoming meeting of the Task
23 Force; and

24 (B) provide for other types of public notice
25 to ensure that all interested persons receive

1 timely notice of each upcoming meeting of the
2 Task Force.

3 (4) MINUTES.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall
5 record and maintain detailed minutes of each
6 meeting of the Task Force, including—

7 (i) the meeting agenda;

8 (ii) a record of the persons present;

9 (iii) a complete and accurate descrip-
10 tion of matters discussed at the meeting
11 and conclusions reached; and

12 (iv) copies of all reports received,
13 issued, or approved by the Task Force in
14 connection with the meeting.

15 (B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY; COPYING.—The
16 Task Force shall make such minutes available
17 for public inspection and copying.

18 (C) ACCURACY.—The co-chairs of the Task
19 Force shall certify the accuracy of all such min-
20 utes.

21 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
23 as may be necessary to carry out this Act, and any
24 amounts so appropriated shall remain available until ex-
25 pend.

1 **SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF TASK FORCE.**

2 The Task Force shall terminate no later than 4 years
3 after enactment of this Act.

4 **SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) CHILD LIVING IN POVERTY.—The term
7 “child living in poverty” means an individual—

8 (A) who is under the age of 18;

9 (B) who lives in a State where the average
10 poverty rate is higher than the national average
11 of 21 percent; and

12 (C) whose family has an income at or
13 below the poverty line.

14 (2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “elementary
15 school”, “poverty line”, “secondary school”, and “in-
16 stitution of higher education” have the meanings
17 given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary
18 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
19 7801).

20 (3) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”
21 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
22 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
23 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

24 (4) MEANS-TESTED FEDERAL BENEFIT PRO-
25 GRAM.—The term “means-tested Federal benefit
26 program” means a mandatory spending program of

1 the Federal Government, in which eligibility for the
2 program's benefits, or the amount of such benefits,
3 are determined on the basis of income or resources
4 of the individual or family seeking the benefit, and
5 includes—

6 (A) the supplemental security income pro-
7 gram under title XVI of the Social Security Act
8 (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);

9 (B) the supplemental nutrition assistance
10 program under the Food and Nutrition Act of
11 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

12 (C) the free and reduced price school lunch
13 program established under the Richard B. Rus-
14 sell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.
15 1751 et seq.) and the summer food service pro-
16 gram for children under section 13 of such Act
17 (20 U.S.C. 1761);

18 (D) the program of block grants for States
19 for temporary assistance for needy families es-
20 tablished under part A of title IV of the Social
21 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

22 (E) the special supplemental nutrition pro-
23 gram for women, infants, and children estab-
24 lished by section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act
25 of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786);

1 (F) the Medicaid program;

2 (G) the earned income credit allowed under
3 section 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of
4 1986;

5 (H) the refundable portion of the child tax
6 credit allowed under section 24(d) of such
7 Code; and

8 (I) payments received under section 8 of
9 the United States Housing Act of 1937.

10 (5) SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH METH-
11 ODS.—The term “scientifically based research meth-
12 ods” means—

13 (A) research that applies rigorous, system-
14 atic, and objective procedures to obtain valid
15 knowledge relevant to child poverty; and

16 (B) includes research that—

17 (i) employs systemic, empirical meth-
18 ods that draw on observation or experi-
19 ment;

20 (ii) involves rigorous data analyses
21 that are adequate to test the stated
22 hypotheses and justify the general conclu-
23 sions drawn;

24 (iii) relies on measurements or obser-
25 vational methods that provide valid data

1 across evaluators and observers and across
2 multiple measurements and observations;
3 and

4 (iv) has been accepted by a peer-re-
5 viewed journal or approved by a panel of
6 independent experts through a comparably
7 rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

8 (6) TIERED-EVIDENCE APPROACHES.—The
9 term “tiered-evidence approaches” include research
10 or activities, including grant classification, where
11 such research, activities or grants are awarded to
12 programs according to their level of evidence of ef-
13 fectiveness.

14 (7) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-
15 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-
16 wealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Com-
17 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam,
18 and the United States Virgin Islands.

19 (8) REPURPOSE.—The term “repurpose” means
20 shifting funding from low-performing or low-use pro-
21 grams, policies, or practices to high impact pro-
22 grams, policies, or practices.

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