

FAIR Taxes for ALL

Co-chairs: People For the American Way, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, National Women's Law Center, Leadership Conference On Civil Rights, USAction, Campaign for America's Future

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New Census Data Shows Largest Increase in Poverty in a Decade, Says Fair Taxes For All Coalition

As more families slip into poverty, President Bush and Republican leaders in Congress continue to exclude millions of working families from increased Child Tax Credits

[Washington, DC] Leaders of the Fair Taxes for All (FTFA) coalition said the new Census figures released today show the greatest increase in poverty in a decade. Between 2001 and 2002, an additional 1.7 million Americans fell into poverty and the poverty rate increased 3.4% - the largest absolute and percentage increase in 10 years. [*Poverty in the United States: 2002*, Census Bureau, 09-26-03]

In light of this significant increase in poverty, FTFA is calling on President Bush and Congressional Republican leaders to extend increased child tax credits to the 7.1 million working families and 12 million children that are still being left behind.

"These working families are nowhere on the President's radar screen," said Roger Hickey, Co-Director of Campaign for America's Future and a Fair Taxes For All co-chair. "While families are feeling real pain in this economy and more Americans are facing poverty than in a decade, the President is doing nothing to stop the callous denial of increased child tax credits for these hard-working families."

Today's Census data also revealed that 2002 was the second consecutive year median income dropped in America. This is the first time there have been two consecutive years of decreased median income since 1990 and 1991. The last time median income was this low was in 1997. Since 2001, the median income in the United States has dropped 1.1%. [*Income in the United States: 2002*, Census Bureau, 09-26-03]

"Nothing could more starkly demonstrate how misguided this administration's one-note tax-cutting economic policy is," said Ralph G. Neas, President of People For the American Way, a Fair Taxes For All co-chair. "Today's poverty report is one more indicator - along with soaring unemployment and the disappearance of vital services like schools and libraries - that the Bush administration's economic strategy doesn't work for America's families."

Additionally, the drop in median income was twice as great for people of color and three times as great for families making less than \$18,000 annually. More than 50% of families at or below the poverty line are headed by women. [*Poverty in the United States: 2002*, Census Bureau, 09-26-03]

"The President has offered nothing but empty rhetoric to these families and children. The fact is that women, minorities and their children are falling behind at an alarming rate," said Joan Entmacher of the National Women's Law Center and a Fair Taxes For All co-chair. "Women struggling to support their families need health care, education, child care and job training - not tax breaks for wealthy elites."

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The Fair Taxes For All Coalition is a massive coalition of coalitions co-chaired by People For the American Way, National Women's Law Center, AFSCME, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, USAction, and the Campaign for America's Future. More than 300 national, state and local groups and coalitions - together representing millions of Americans - have pledged to defeat Bush Administration tax proposals that would take resources from health care, education, Social Security, and homeland security in order to give massive tax breaks to the very wealthiest Americans.