

VOTING & ELECTIONS

FACT SHEET

Why Women Should Vote: To Get Single Mothers the Support They Need

May 2012

Millions of single mothers struggle to provide for their families on their own. By voting, women can make sure our elected leaders support single moms so they can make ends meet and get ahead.

Many single mothers have low wages and little support.

- More than 72 percent of single mothers are in the workforce, and almost 60 percent of those who are employed work full time, year round. But single mothers' incomes are low, and they don't get the support they need.
- The typical single mother working outside the home had a family income of \$30,298 in 2010; 30 percent of single mothers working outside the home had family incomes below \$20,000.
- Poor families are mostly headed by single mothers. When these families pay for child care, they spend, on average, 40 percent of their income on it, a larger percentage of their family budget than higher-income families spend. But only about one in six children eligible for child care assistance under federal law receives it.
- Only 42 percent of custodial mothers received all of the child support they were due in 2009. Nearly 30 percent received none of the child support they were due.

Many single mothers and their children are struggling to make ends meet.

- In 2010, over 40 percent of single-mother families were poor and the percentage of African-American and Hispanic single-mother families living in poverty was even higher: 48 percent and 50 percent, respectively.
- More than half of all poor children (55 percent) lived in families headed by women in 2010.
- Single mothers are having an especially difficult time in the current economy. In 2011, female-headed households had an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent--their highest annual average unemployment rate since this data was first recorded in 1967.

Policy makers will decide whether to protect supports for single mothers—or put the burden of deficit reduction on their backs.

- By the end of 2012, Congress will have to make critical decisions about the federal budget. A majority of the House of Representatives voted to reduce the deficit by targeting programs especially important to low-income families, including Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, Food Stamps, child care and

other social services, and the refundable Child Tax Credit. These programs could be protected while still reducing the deficit, by closing tax loopholes for the very wealthy and corporations.

- Many tax cuts expire at the end of 2012, including tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003 and valuable improvements in the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income working families that were enacted in 2009. Some policy makers propose to extend all of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts – including those that benefit only households with incomes above \$250,000 – but not the improvements in the Child Tax Credit and EITC. If this approach had been adopted in 2010, millionaires would have received an average tax cut of over \$100,000 in 2011, while 30 percent of single mothers would have received no tax benefit at all.

- Many states are cutting back on child care assistance for low-income families—by limiting eligibility, adding to waiting lists, reducing the amounts paid to providers, or increasing the payments parents are required to make. Additional federal funding is essential to reverse this trend and help women and their families afford the child care they need.
- Federal funds help support state child support enforcement programs that serve 17.5 million children – one in four – and collected over \$26 billion in child support in fiscal year 2010. But federal funding for child support enforcement was reduced in 2011.

When women vote, leaders listen.

REGISTER. VOTE.

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