

Support Massachusetts Abuse Survivors and Their Families!

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides financial support to families facing hardships

- According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 2015 EITC **lifted 3.3 million children out of poverty**.
- Children of families who are able to increase their income and move out of poverty, have better health, school performance, and college attendance compared to those who continue to struggle with economic hardship.
- Many **families use the EITC to pay for necessities**, such as home repairs, vehicles to commute to work, and education to boost employability and earning power.
- EITC expansions were the most important contribution to an increase in employment among single mothers in the 1990s.¹

No survivor of domestic violence should be prevented from accessing the EITC

- Current tax law prevents survivors of domestic violence from claiming the EITC unless:
 - They file joint tax returns with their abuser, which may put them at **risk of further abuse**, or
 - They qualify for Head of Household status, which requires that they live on their own for at least 6 months of the tax year and pay at least 50% of household expenses during those months.
- Instead of providing financial support, our tax law penalizes those who flee their abusers.
- These limited tax filing options are not in the best health interests of an abused or abandoned spouse.

Domestic violence harms families and the economy

- Rates of domestic abuse are higher for those living in poverty, compared to higher income households.²
- Women who experience severe aggression by men are more likely to be unemployed and experience physical, reproductive, psychological and social health problems.³
- **In the past, intimate partner violence against women alone cost an estimated \$8.3 billion health care dollars to society.**⁴

Support An Act Improving the Earned Income Credit for Healthier Families (S.1521/H.1504), which creates a safe way for abused and abandoned spouses to access the EITC

- **EITC enables single mothers to return to employment.**⁵
- EITC boosts survivors' earning power, provides a safety net, and helps survivors achieve financial independence from their abusive partners.



For more information about the bill, please contact:

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Summary of Bill

Senate Bill S.1521
House Bill H.1504

Title: An Act Improving the Earned Income Credit for Healthier Families

Main Provisions:

1. Increases the state EITC from 23 percent of the federal credit to 50 percent of the federal credit
2. Directs the Department of Revenue to engage in an aggressive and comprehensive EITC promotion and outreach campaign to ensure no eligible EITC taxpayer fails to claim it.
3. Allows certain abandoned spouses and survivors of domestic violence to access the credit.
4. This outreach campaign will bring an additional economic stimulus package of approximately \$208 million dollars into the Massachusetts economy.

AN ACT IMPROVING THE EARNED INCOME CREDIT FOR HEALTHIER FAMILIES.

SECTION 1. Section 6 (h) of chapter 62 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 239, the number "23" and inserting in place thereof the following number: - 50.

SECTION 2. Section 6 (h) of chapter 62 , as so appearing, is further amended by striking out, in line 243, the number "23" and inserting in place thereof the following number: - 50.

SECTION 3. Section 6 (h) of chapter 62, as so appearing, is further amended by inserting after the word "interest" in line 249, the following paragraphs: **(2) For purposes of the earned income credit under this subsection, a married taxpayer will satisfy the joint filing requirement under Section 32(d) of the Code if the taxpayer files an income tax return using a filing status of married filing separately and the taxpayer: (i) is living apart from the individual's spouse at the time the taxpayer files his or her tax return, (ii) is unable to file a joint return because the taxpayer is a survivor of domestic abuse, and (iii) indicates on his or her income tax return in accordance with the relevant instructions that the taxpayer meets the criteria under (i) and (ii).** (3) In order to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the state and federal earned income credit , the department shall: (i) provide all employers with a multilingual poster and a notice that sets forth the rights to the earned income credit under this chapter; (ii) require that all employers doing business in Massachusetts post information about the earned income credit in a conspicuous location at the place of employment; (iii) coordinate a notification system by the commonwealth to applicants for and recipients of unemployment insurance under chapter 151A, applicants for and recipients of transitional assistance benefits, including food stamps, under chapter 18, and to recipients of subsidized health insurance under chapter 118E; and (iv) collaborate with labor organizations, chambers of commerce, municipalities, community-based organizations, and taxpayer advocates. The multilingual notice requirement in subsection (i) shall comply with the language requirements for employer's unemployment notices under section 62A(d)(iii) of chapter 151A.

For more information, contact

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<http://childrenshealthwatch.org/public-policy/hfec>

Supporting Organizations

ABCD

Allston Brighton CDC

Berkshire United Way

Boston EITC Coalition

Boston Public Health Commission

Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester

Brazilian Women's Group

Cambridge Community Center

Catholic Charities

Children's HealthWatch

Coalition for Social Justice

Commonwealth of MA United Ways

Community Teamwork

Ellis Memorial and Eldredge House

EmPath

Family ACCESS of Newton

Greater Boston Legal Services

Homes for Families

Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción

Irish International Immigrant Center

Jane Doe

Jewish Community Relations Council

MA AFL-CIO

MA Alliance of Portuguese Speakers

MA Association of CDC's

MA Association for Community Action

Massachusetts Association of Early

Education and Care

Massachusetts Association for Mental Health

MA Communities Action Network

MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy

Coalition

MA Public Health Association

Madison Park Community Development

Corp

Matahari

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

NAACP, New England Area Conference

New England United for Justice

Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc.

Somerville Homeless Coalition

South Shore Stars

The BEST Corp. Hospitality Training Center

United Way of Central Massachusetts

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and

Merrimack Valley

United Way of Greater Plymouth County

Witnesses to Hunger, Boston

¹ Policy Basics: The Earned Income Tax Credit. (2016, October 21). Retrieved from <http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/policy-basics-the-earned-income-tax-credit>

² Brown, F. B. (2016). Permitting Abused Spouses to Claim the Earned Income Tax Credit in Separate Returns. *William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law*, 22(3), 453-494. Retrieved from <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmjowl/vol22/iss3/2>

³ Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences. (2015, March 03). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>

⁴ Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences. (2015, March 03). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>

⁵ Crépon, B., & Van den Berg, G. J. (2016). Active Labor Market Policies. *Annual Review of Economics*, 8, 521-546. doi:10.1146/annurev-economics-080614-115738