

It's **Mama Care Fair** time once again!

Although we did not have the volunteer support this year to gather donations and the folks who have provided services such as massage, haircuts, etc. all had to work Monday eve...it's tradition and we couldn't stand not celebrating you hard working mamas! So Jen and I are making dinner for y'all and will play you some music while you relax and enjoy yourselves. Jen's Kissing Ground Farm is donating farm raised, organically grown chickens!

Please join us tomorrow, **Monday, May 4th from 6 – 8 pm at Darby's Café, 211 5th Avenue, in downtown Olympia.**

The Olympia Childcare Collective will be doing fun activities with the kids down the street at the POWER office.

If you are not a mama, or your kids are all grown up, and you would like to make a contribution or help the night of the event, please let us know!

POWER

Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights

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Find us on **Facebook**.

POWER is an organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and care giving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

Below:

1. Ben and Jerry want to pay their taxes! Tell Congress.
2. You will soon be able to select your own Medicaid plan.
3. Talk Poverty Radio!

4. Support WA Senator Murray's Raise the Minimum Wage bill.
 5. Congressional Testimony – TANF's Not Alright
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1. It's Ben and Jerry—the co-founders of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream—and we need your help.

We want to pay our fair share of taxes, but Republicans in Congress are trying to pass an unnecessary tax giveaway to America's wealthiest citizens. We don't want, need, or deserve this tax cut—which is why we're asking you to sign our petition to Senate Democrats that states:

If Senate and House Republicans have their way, they will eliminate the estate tax, which affects only the wealthiest 0.2% of taxpayers. Repealing the estate tax would hurt our economy and be fundamentally unfair. Senate Democrats: Stand with us—and stay united against the repeal.

Here's the truth: *We don't need this stupid tax cut.*

As we recently wrote in an op-ed in *USA Today*, we're wealthy thanks to the good fortune of our efforts—but also because of many other societal factors that contributed to our wealth.¹ The estate tax is one of the ways that the wealthy pay forward so the next generation has the opportunities we had.

The estate tax, which the U.S. has had for more than a century, currently affects Americans with estates worth at least \$5.4 million, or \$10.8 million for a couple—only 1 out of every 500 taxpayers.² And yet, it's been a target of right-wing lawmakers, working on behalf of their wealthy donors.

[Click here to sign our petition calling on Senate Democrats to stand united and stop this Republican giveaway to the superrich:](#)

<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/stand-with-ben-jerryby-1?source=mo&id=113354-15283222-O1NKeTx>

Congress has shrunk the estate tax in recent years—and now the Senate and House, in advisory votes largely along party lines, have voted to repeal it entirely.³ The votes are only advisory, for now, but when the Republicans press this issue again, Senate Democrats will need to be ready to beat back the repeal and block this latest Republican giveaway to the superrich.

We know this may not be as fun as helping us choose names for ice cream flavors—but it's critical to send a message that Congress shouldn't be working on behalf of only the wealthiest Americans but should get back to the people's business. Wages have been stagnant for decades.⁴ Young people are carrying around anvils on their backs called student debt.⁵ Our public infrastructure is falling apart.⁶

Good grief, Congress. With all this going on, are you really going to give another tax break to those of us who need it least?

[Sign our petition—tell Senate Democrats to stand united and ensure that Republicans don't give multimillionaires and billionaires even more tax breaks.](#)

Thanks for all you do.

–Ben and Jerry

Sources:

1. "Ben & Jerry: We don't need this stupid tax cut," *USA Today*, April 16, 2015
<http://www.moveon.org/r/?r=304167&id=113354-15283222-O1NKeTx&t=3>
2. Ibid.
3. "House votes to repeal estate tax," *The Hill*, April 16, 2015
<http://www.moveon.org/r/?r=304169&id=113354-15283222-O1NKeTx&t=4>

4. "For most workers, real wages have barely budged for decades," Pew Research Center, October 9, 2014

<http://www.moveon.org/r/?r=303882&id=113354-15283222-O1NKeTx&t=5>

5. "Average Student Loan Debt Approaches \$30,000," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 13, 2014

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/11/13/average-student-loan-debt-hits-30-000>

6. "Falling apart: America's neglected infrastructure," CBS, November 23, 2014

<http://www.moveon.org/r/?r=304172&id=113354-15283222-O1NKeTx&t=8>

2. Medicaid Plan Selection Coming May 11th!

People applying for Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage will soon be able to choose their managed care plan through the Washington Healthplanfinder (HPF). This will be similar to the process used today by other customers to select commercial, "qualified health plans" via the Healthplanfinder.

Beginning May 11, 2015, they can:

- * Review managed care plan choices available in their area.
- * Examine information about the past performance of those plans.
- * Locate providers, hospitals, or clinics available in each plan.
- * Choose a plan that will best meet their needs.

Existing Apple Health clients will be able to use Healthplanfinder to change their plan at any time. As before, they can also submit changes via an enrollment form, by calling the HCA call center or by going online to the ProviderOne client portal.

The Medicaid Plan Selection project is the culmination of a year of collaborative work between the Health Care Authority (HCA), Health Benefit Exchange (HBE), and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Please see the attached FAQs and the essential health services covered by all Apple Health managed care plans:

Here are some FAQs about the new Medicaid Plan Selection feature on the Washington Healthplanfinder for Washington Apple Health applicants.

What is Washington Apple Health managed care?

Managed care is a term used to describe the health care organizations and plans that provide medical services for Apple Health (Medicaid). Each managed care plan contracts with a network of health care providers (such as hospitals and additional physicians). You will need to select a primary care provider from the managed care plan you enroll in. Your primary care provider will help you manage and coordinate your health care.

Which Apple Health managed care plans can I choose from?

If you are eligible for Apple Health, then managed care plans are available based on where you live. You can view and choose plans from your Healthplanfinder account dashboard.

Am I required to enroll in an Apple Health managed care plan?

Most individuals enrolled in Apple Health (Medicaid) receive their health services through one of the managed care plans that contract with the Health Care Authority. You may be exempt from enrolling in a managed care plan if you are:

- » American Indian/Alaska Native.
- » Enrolled in other health insurance.

Can each household member be enrolled in a different Apple Health managed care plan?

No, everyone enrolled in Apple Health (Medicaid) within one household has to be on the same managed care plan. However, each person in the household can have their own primary care provider.

How do I change my Apple Health managed care plan?

You have several options:

- » Change it on the Washington Healthplanfinder website. www.wahealthplanfinder.org
- » Visit the ProviderOne Client Portal website. <https://www.waproviderone.org/client>
- » Email us by going to <https://fortress.wa.gov/hca/p1contactus/>. Choose the “Client” tab. On the “Select Topic” question, choose “Enroll/Chance Health Plans.”
- » Download the enrollment form. [www.hca.wa.gov/medicaid/forms/ Documents/13_862.pdf](http://www.hca.wa.gov/medicaid/forms/Documents/13_862.pdf)

Documents/13_862.pdf

Print it, fill it out, and mail it according to the instructions. No postage is necessary.

- » Fill out the enrollment form and fax it to 1-866-668-1214.
- » Call Apple Health Customer Service at 1-800-562-3022.

<http://app.mx3.americanprogressaction.org/e/er?s=785&lid=4795&elq=96d2a2a264f14590b17c9b9aa4da1059&elqaid=25376&elqat=1&elqTrackId=cfe41fad7efd45ec979d0f2542dd3c64>

April 27, 2015 | [View Online](#)

3. Help us promote the relaunch of TalkPoverty Radio

Episodes Airing Every Thursday at 4pm ET

We're excited to announce the return of TalkPoverty Radio—one of the few programs entirely devoted to covering poverty in America—on the We Act Radio Network. **Starting April 30th, the show will air Thursdays at 4pm ET.** Be sure to [tune in online](#) or by downloading each episode as a podcast through iTunes.

Hosted by Rebecca Vallas and Tracey Ross, this hour-long show lifts up some of the untold stories

of the 45 million Americans living below the poverty line. Hear from journalists, policy experts, grassroots advocates, elected officials, and—most importantly—people struggling on the brink right now, as we bust myths, offer solutions, and focus on the hottest issues and policy debates.

Check out the Half in Ten [website](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

4. Raise the Wage Act Would Help Millions of Working Families

By [Lecia Imbery](#)

April 30, 2015

<http://www.chn.org/2015/04/30/raise-the-wage-act-would-help-millions-of-working-families/12>

The Coalition on Human Needs applauds Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA) for introducing the Raise the Wage Act. The bill would increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$12 by 2020, boosting wages for nearly 38 million workers in America and roughly restoring the minimum wage to its purchasing power in the late 1960s. The bill would also gradually eliminate the subminimum wage for tipped workers (or tipped minimum wage), which has been frozen at \$2.13 an hour since 1991. In addition, it finally indexes the minimum wage so that it maintains its value over time as prices and the cost of living increase.

“Raising subpar wages would improve the lives of millions, decrease poverty, and stimulate our economy,” said Deborah Weinstein, executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs. “Currently, a mom working full time at a minimum wage job and raising

two children earns \$4500 below the poverty line. And tipped workers are nearly twice as likely as non-tipped workers to live in poverty. As the wealthiest nation on Earth, we can and should do better by our workers. The 38 million who would benefit include 21 million women, more than a third of African-American workers, and 40 percent of Hispanic workers. Nearly one-quarter of all children – almost 19 million – have a parent who would get a raise.”

“Income inequality has grown to crisis levels in America, and wage stagnation is one of the driving factors. The minimum wage has continued to lose value over the last two and half decades, leaving the hardest working Americans further behind. Raising the minimum wage will lift millions of working families out of poverty and put us on the path to shared prosperity. By increasing earnings by more than \$100 billion over the next five years for the workers affected, this bill would also benefit businesses and help build an economy that works for everyone. Raising the minimum wage has widespread support across America and is long overdue. The Coalition on Human Needs urges members of Congress to support and enact this legislation without delay to ensure hardworking families can get ahead.”

5. TANF’s Not Alright

By [Indi Dutta-Gupta](#)

April 30, 2015

<http://www.chn.org/2015/04/30/tanfs-not-alright/19>

[Editor’s Note: Today, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources is holding a hearing about Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Below you’ll find a very timely post by Indi Dutta-Gupta and Kali Grant, both of Georgetown University’s Project on Deep Poverty.

*The hearing is titled “[Ideas for Improve Welfare Programs to Help More Families Find Work and Escape Poverty](#).” I’m going to attend – will report back on what’s said. What’s on my mind heading over there is nicely summarized by Indi and Kali’s line below:
“TANF programs are measured by how few people participate, not how many succeed.”
– Deborah Weinstein]*

This post was originally published on [The Hill](#) on April 30.

Nearly 20 years after the watershed 1996 welfare law, something is not right. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1996 was intended to reduce poverty, primarily by improving employment and earnings outcomes for disadvantaged families. At the time, there was hope among some that the new, flexible welfare grant to states would lead to experimentation and more effective solutions to provide both a safety net and a ladder of opportunity. Though TANF seemed promising to some in its first four years, evidence from the last 15 raises alarms and suggests a need for new strategies to help disadvantaged families.

Alongside the booming labor market, enlarged tax credits, and expanded child care assistance in the late 1990s, the 1996 law appeared to some to have been largely successful. By 2000, the official poverty for children had fallen to a [two-decade low](#), and prime age, never-married mothers with limited education had [closed a 25-percentage-point gap](#) in employment rates between similar women without children. During the weaker economy that followed, however, childhood [deep poverty](#) rose significantly, and while this can't necessarily be attributed fully to TANF, research suggests that the program isn't doing its part to help low-income families succeed.

Let's start with how little TANF does to reduce poverty and deep poverty (i.e. living below half the poverty line) today. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) [finds](#) that TANF benefits lifted just 1.4 million people out of poverty in 2005, compared to 5.1 million and 4.0 million by the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and SNAP (formerly food stamps) respectively. Similarly, CBPP [finds](#) that AFDC lifted 62 percent of otherwise deeply poor children above half the poverty line in 1995, while TANF lifted just 21 percent out of deep poverty in 2005. This is particularly troubling, since early childhood poverty causes short- and long-term harm, which in turn poses enormous [costs to our economy](#).

TANF's poverty-reducing impact has dwindled in part because it reaches a very small share of people in poverty and its benefits have become meager. Just [25 out of every 100](#) families with children in poverty received TANF benefits in 2012, compared to 68 out of 100 in 1996. TANF benefits are so small that by 2014, they failed to afford fair market rent in [every state](#).

And even as need grew dramatically during the largest recession since the Great Depression, assistance through TANF barely budged.

We wouldn't necessarily worry about this declining role for TANF's cash assistance in reducing poverty if TANF were effectively preparing disadvantaged families for labor market success. In reality, states largely [failed](#) to take advantage of their expanded flexibility to experiment in a rigorous and accountable way, instead diverting fungible dollars away from initiatives that offer job preparation and placement in adequate employment opportunities. TANF programs are measured by how few people participate, not how many succeed.

To be sure, other programs partially filled some gaps created by TANF. The SNAP program [responded](#) robustly during the Great Recession. [Research](#) suggests that the introduction of food stamps improved long-term health and educational outcomes for children born in the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has expanded to further promote employment and supplement earnings, [in turn](#) shrinking child poverty and boosting infant and maternal health, educational achievement, adult earnings, and even retirement security. Data revealing the rise in childhood deep poverty already account for these two programs, however.

It's clear that we need new strategies in place for helping low-income families prosper, and one approach is truly refocusing TANF on work. The pre-TANF New Hope Project in Milwaukee [significantly improved](#) parents' employment and earnings and children's outcomes, with society's gains [easily exceeding](#) the program's costs. Yet no state has followed through and implemented New Hope's proven package of offering anyone who is willing to work full-time the jobs, benefits, and supports needed to stay out of poverty. With disadvantaged workers facing an increasingly inflexible and unforgiving labor market, successful ideas with bipartisan support like subsidized jobs, sector-based job training, increased access to early learning and care, and an expanded Child Tax Credit may offer a path forward for establishing a New Hope-style social contract.

Like SNAP and the EITC, TANF should offer families both economic security and opportunity. For many, TANF increasingly does neither. It's time for policymakers to consider new strategies, including refocusing TANF itself on employment and child well-being outcomes, to help reverse the tide.

This post was co-authored by Indi Dutta-Gupta, the director of Project on Deep Poverty at the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, id141@law.georgetown.edu, and Kali Grant, program Assistant at Project on Deep Poverty at the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, kag245@law.georgetown.edu.