



Tired Bones

Katie Adams

Policy Advocate for Domestic Issues

Advocates around the country (including myself) spent the better part of 2021 working to get the Build Back Better plan passed through Congress. Its passage promises opportunities for real generational investments in areas of great need and long neglect. And then, due to obstruction and a failed Senate, the bill did not pass. It's crushing to work on something for so long that could have such a monumental impact and then not see those hopes come to fruition. I've worked in Congress for a while now and thought I'd steeled myself better against the dispiriting frustration and disappointment that comes from seeing important bills fail. I think one of the most vexing points of this particular instance is because we know the policies of Build Back Better work.

Last year, Congress took temporary action to prevent evictions, implemented emergency paid leave, and offered unemployment assistance, stimulus checks, and Child Tax Credit payments. As a result, even during times of mass unemployment and societal upheaval, [poverty rates went down](#). These actions prove poverty and its devastation are policy choices that can be remedied, at least in part, through policy decisions. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, we already know that [highly effective strides](#) have been made in cutting child poverty nearly in half with the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit. In fact, the CTC has helped nearly 35 million households cover the costs of food, education, and clothing, all necessities. We should be making these tax provisions permanent, allowing for healthier families to not just survive, but thrive. Who would disagree?

Yet when presented with the moment to make those policies even more far-reaching and long-lasting, Congress squandered the opportunity for transformational change. Sometimes it feels like Members of Congress don't see that the choices they make every day on Capitol Hill have real-world consequences. While seemingly endless debate takes place, families and communities are struggling, slipping further down the economic ladder.

But I didn't write all of this to leave you with a sour taste in your mouth. Because ultimately our hope isn't in the flawed institutions of government or even churches. Our hope is in a shared community of grace. One that believes in breathing new

prophetic life into seemingly hopeless situations. We know that out of tired bones, empty desert, or dry rock, new life can spring forth. We've seen it happen before. We won't stop working to make sure that the ideas present in Build Back Better—more equitable access to basic rights like housing, healthcare, food, and education—are in current and future pieces of legislation. No matter what the next version of Build Back Better looks like, the faith community will be there exhorting Congress to prioritize caring for the most vulnerable. I look forward to seeing you there too!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katie Adams is the Policy Advocate for Domestic Issues for the United Church of Christ.

LEARN

ucc.org/justice

DONATE

ucc.org/donate

ARCHIVE

bit.ly/witness4justice



The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.