Polling shows Democrats gain when visibly fighting for CTC, lose support when they don’t

Executive Summary
Recent public polling by Data for Progress and Morning Consult has shown that Democrats stand to gain when they make an affirmative case that they are fighting for families by working to extend the expanded Child Tax Credit, and when they attack Republicans for opposing CTC expansions. Conversely, remaining silent or allowing the impression that Democrats let the Child Tax Credit expire is damaging.

While support for the CTC has been consistently strong, hovering around 60% in the Fighting Chance for Families/Data for Progress tracking poll, it has been extremely popular with parents: +40 net support among all parents and +56 among those who say they have been receiving the CTC. These monthly checks are one of the most tangible impacts of Democrats’ policies over the first year of the Biden administration. As they have ended, polling finds that parents blame the party in power.

New Data for Progress data finds that the difference between a proactive Democratic message on fighting for the CTC and a narrative that Democrats are to blame for CTC expiration is a swing of 14 points among likely voters, and a stunning 39 points among parents—enough to flip them from trusting Democratic on supporting families to trusting Republicans more.

A new Morning Consult survey shows the same dynamic observed in the Data for Progress experiment playing out in the real world—most congressional Democrats are being relatively quiet about the CTC now, and as the checks have run out they are losing support among parents who are CTC recipients. Morning Consult has measured lower CTC support in the past than most other public polling, so it is striking that they find such an impact now that the checks have stopped, underscoring the strength of the issue among parents.

Together, these surveys suggest that Democrats must be vocal about fighting to extend their larger Child Tax Credit so it is a winner for them. Silence on this issue is not simply neutral, it is actively hurting Democrats’ standing with likely voters, especially parents.

At the same time, Democracy Corps has found an attack on Republicans for opposing the CTC expansion to be among the strongest attacks tested, and the very strongest attack for winning over key constituencies like Blacks, Millennials, white unmarried women, and working class voters under 50, as well as parents. This reinforces the effectiveness of Democrats going on offense on this issue.

Fighting for the Expanded CTC Grows Democratic Advantage on Family Issues
The findings of a survey conducted by Data for Progress on behalf of Fighting Chance for Families show that likely voters have increased trust in Democrats to support families with children when they hear about how Democrats are fighting to extend the expanded Child Tax Credit.
Credit. On the other hand, trust in Democrats decreases when they are told that Democrats let the expanded, monthly payments expire in December 2021. Key findings:

- **Democrats Enjoy Baseline Advantage on Family Issues**: Democrats enjoy a 9-point advantage on support for families with children (50 percent trust Democrats more, 41 percent trust Republicans more).

- **When Told Democrats Are Fighting to Continue CTC, Advantage Grows**: Among the half of the sample of voters that were told that “Democrats are moving to continue the expanded CTC in 2022,” topline trust in the Democratic Party increases by 5 points on net. This increase in trust in the Democratic Party can be observed across partisanship: on net, trust in the Democratic Party increases among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans by 4 points, 3 points, and 7 points, respectively, compared to their baselines.

- **When Told Democrats Let CTC Expire, Advantage Evaporates**: Within the sample that was told that “Democrats allowed the expanded CTC to expire,” the Democratic Party’s trust advantage fell by 9 points. This completely wipes away the Democratic Party’s trust advantage on the issue of supporting parents with children. After this treatment is applied, 45 percent of likely voters say they trust the Democratic Party and 45 percent say they trust the Republican Party.

- **Swings in Perception of Democrats is More Pronounced Among Parents with Young Children**: Among parents of children younger than 18, knowing that Democrats allowed the expanded CTC to expire decreases trust for the Democratic Party by 18 points on net, compared against the baseline. This change is so large that trust on the issue of supporting parents with children actually flips from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. However, when parents know that Democrats are working to extend the program, Democratic Party trust increases 21 points, on net, relative to the baseline.
Democrats Losing Support More Quickly Among CTC Recipients

A recent survey by Morning Consult found that support for Democrats is eroding more quickly among former recipients of monthly CTC checks. In December, CTC recipients favored Democrats on the congressional generic ballot by a 12-point margin (49 percent to 37 percent), but that advantage has now dwindled to a single point (44 percent to 43 percent). Among all voters, there was no significant change between December and February. Morning Consult also noted other metrics deteriorating quickly among CTC recipients:

Biden’s approval rating has recently been on the decline among all voters, but it has been more dramatic among child tax credit recipients. The latest survey found 43 percent of those recipients approved of Biden’s job performance, down 13 points since the December poll, while the share who disapprove increased 15 points, to 56 percent. The share of recipients who “strongly” approve of his job performance halved, from 35 percent to 17 percent. The share of child tax credit recipients with unfavorable views of Democrats in Congress increased from 35 percent to 50 percent since late December, while the share who view congressional Republicans unfavorably increased from 41 percent to 51 percent. The majority of expanded child tax credit recipients (57 percent) disapprove of Biden’s handling of the economy, up 14 points since December, compared with a 2-point increase among the overall electorate, to 55 percent.

Attack on Republicans for Opposing CTC Expansion is Among Top Dem Messages

Democracy Corps research finds that attacking Republicans for opposing the expanded Child Tax Credit was among Democrats’ strongest attacks, and was the top attack with many key demographics. The message tested was, “Every Republican in Congress voted against the expanded Child Tax Credit that is giving monthly checks to working families with kids and has been a lifeline for so many working families - helping them put food on the table, pay for child care & more. They will repeal it and put 4 million kids back into poverty.”

“The Child Tax Credit received on a monthly basis is changing the 2022 political dynamics and will now be central to the campaign contrast. It is embraced by both Black voters and white working class voters under 50 years, as well as white parents, and they become more supportive when it is attacked. The CTC has opened up parts of the white working class to the idea Democrats use government to help them. Whether its repeal raises your taxes or drives millions of kids into poverty have become the top attacks on Republicans.” — Pollster Stan Greenberg
Repeal of CTC (increased poverty & taxes) strongest attacks for Blacks, millennials, & white unmarried women, but also under 50 white working class + parents

Now you will read some things Democratic critics are saying about the Republicans in Congress. Please pick the THREE that raise the most doubts in your mind about Republicans.

(SPLIT A) CTC LOWERS TAXES:
Every Republican in Congress voted against the expanded the Child Tax Credit that is giving monthly checks to working families with kids. They will repeal it and raise taxes on virtually every working family.

(SPLIT B) CTC CUTS POVERTY:
Every Republican in Congress voted against the expanded the Child Tax Credit that is giving monthly checks to working families with kids. They will repeal it and put 4 million kids back into poverty.

Intense support for child tax credit among those who shift to Democrats and shift to be more engaged.

Now, I'd like you to rate your feelings toward some people, organizations, and ideas, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold.

THERMOMETERS
REGISTERED VOTERS

Child tax credit—$300 a month for each child deposited directly into family bank accounts