

Raychel Ward  
Livermore Falls  
LD 1294

Good morning, my name is Raychel Ward, and I am from Livermore Falls, Maine. I am a Maine State Parent Ambassador.

I am here to tell you what the Child Tax Credit means to me and my family. I am asking Maine legislators to support expanding the Child Tax Credit by passing LD 1294.

During the pandemic, my family was lucky enough to benefit from the expanded Child Tax Credit. These payments made it easier to support my children. Ashliee is 10 years old and Winter is now 6 years old. Both my daughters are on the autism spectrum and have varying sensory and safety needs.

Safety needs for young children with autism cannot always be planned for. For example, when Winter was 2 1/2 years old, she learned how to open her window and screen. The lock on the window was broken and our landlord had neglected to fix it for months. We were so worried that she'd open the window when we were asleep but we couldn't afford to fix the problem.

The Child Tax Credit allowed us to purchase the window alarms we needed to keep Winter safe. It also helped us to stay housed since our rent had gone way up. This was a huge relief for our family. It was extra income that was flexible - we could use it for exactly what we needed.

Now Mr B has joined our family, our 5-month-old son. He was born with hyperinsulinism. This requires frequent visits to see specialists at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. We have had to put money away to help cover the added cost of travel and treatment. We were able to set aside \$300 from this year's Child Tax Credit to cover the cost of the train while utilizing care nets to cover his treatment costs.

Doubling the Child Tax Credit for kids under 6 would be huge for us. A child's first years are so important to set them up for a healthy life. For families with no wiggle room in our budget - especially parents of kids with special needs - the Child Tax Credit means we can better handle unexpected crises or emergencies. An increase is needed to give families more security and the ability to respond quickly to our children's needs.

As parents, we will always rise to the occasion and figure out what is best for our children, often sacrificing our own needs. But something like LD 1294, which helps parents with young children out at a crucial time in a family's life, is huge. I ask Maine legislators to vote to expand the Child Tax Credit.