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JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

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Louisiana's EITC Increase

Benefiting Working Families and Our Communities

by Alí Bustamante, Ph.D.

JSRI Future Activities

June 25

Fr. Fred Kammer will participate in a local board meeting of the Capital Post-Conviction Project of Louisiana.

July 10-11

Fr. Kammer will participate in a New York City meeting of the CEO search committee of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

JSRI Recent Activities

June 4

Dr. Nicholas Mitchell attended a meeting of the state task force on secure care standards for juveniles.

June 5

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in a meeting of criminal justice reform grantees at the Langeloth Foundation in New York City.

June 7

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference's Criminal Justice Reform Committee at Catholic

Earlier this month, the Louisiana Legislature did the right thing in increasing the state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 3.5 to 5 percent of the federal credit. This legislation acknowledges the importance of working families to the broader economy and promotes economic opportunity.



Louisiana family featured in JSRI's SNAP Report.

The EITC is one of the most fair and just aspects of our tax code. Since 2007, Louisiana's EITC has been a bipartisan tax credit for working people with low incomes that helps families meet their basic needs while strengthening local communities to the benefit of everyone in Louisiana. The few hundred dollars provided by Louisiana's EITC allows working people and their families to stay current on bills or to afford a car repair so they can get to work. Annually, about one in three Louisiana tax filers claim the EITC.

Charities Diocese of
Baton Rouge.

June 9

Katie O'Dowd married Philippe Smalley in Holy Name of Jesus Church on campus.

June 12

Fr. Kammer provided a New Orleans post-Katrina social analysis to students visiting from Gonzaga College High School in D.C.

June 16

Dr. Alí Bustamante presented a paper on employment regulations and labor market performance at the Labor and Employment Relations Association Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Md.

June 18

JRSI welcomed Kelsey McLaughlin as the new administrative assistant on staff, replacing Katie O'Dowd, who leaves this week to begin a move to Tacoma, Wa.

June 20

Fr. Kammer presented a workshop on using the Pastoral Circle reflection process at the Jesuit Province Conference on Reconciliation in Denver. Dr. Mitchell participated in a panel on racism at the same conference.

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The EITC benefits the common good by lowering poverty, reducing low-weight and premature births, improving children's educational performance and college attendance, as well increasing children's future earnings as adults.[1] There is a consensus among academic and policy researchers that the EITC promotes work while also improving the economic opportunities of the least among us.[2]

Moving Gulf South states forward means spending on things that benefit all of us and make our communities thrive and not on tax breaks that mostly benefit a few. Whether families have enough to cover basic necessities or communities have good teachers, access to high-quality health care, and first responders who keep us safe should not be determined by a tax code manipulated by the powerful.

When a few at the top receive mind-boggling tax cuts while schools suffer, college costs increase, hospitals get closed, and our communities struggle, then we know our priorities are all wrong.

Furthermore, the EITC helps families to grow and thrive. The EITC contributes to workers' ability to make a family wage, "a wage sufficient to maintain a family and allow it to live decently." [3] Similarly, the EITC relaxes the "marriage penalty" for low-income, married workers filing joint tax returns.[4]

Our economy is driven by its people and not special interest groups. It's never a bad time to invest in the people of the Gulf South. Working people spend their earnings on everything from gas to groceries and haircuts to homes – that spending is what drives business, not tax exemptions. If we cleaned up our tax code we'd have more to invest in the things that create thriving communities and make life easier for families, like increasing the EITC.

[1] Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2018). *Policy basics: The Earned Income Tax Credit*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics-eitc.pdf>

[2] Marr, C., Huang, C., Sherman, A., & DeBot, B. (2015). *EITC and Child Tax Credit promote work, reduce poverty, and support children's development, research finds*. Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/6-26-12tax.pdf>

[3] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. (2007). *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 250.

[4] National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2010). *Letter to House and Senate on Earned Income and Child Tax Credits*.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to jsri@loyno.edu

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