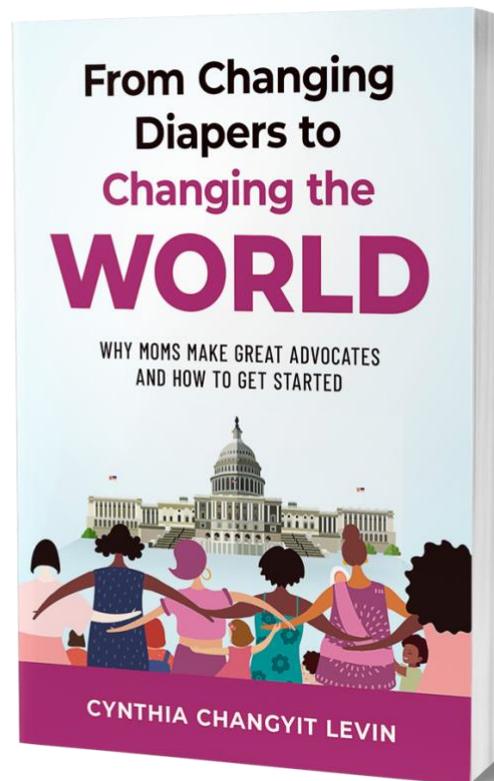


Using EPIC Format to write Letters to the Editor



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WRITING WITH EPIC FORMAT

results

(AS LEARNED FROM RESULTS)

E

ENGAGE the audience

Try using a question, a story, or a startling fact.

P

Describe the PROBLEM

Statistics or talking points from a reputable source can be helpful.

I

INFORM about a solution

Tell how your particular solution directly addresses the problem. Give evidence if you have it.

C

CALL your audience into action

In person: Ask a clear yes or no question
In writing: Name the individuals you want to take the action.

Sample EPIC Format

(from MomsRising.org April 2022)

Engage: *When I was a new mom, I decided quit my job because I didn't find acceptable childcare. I don't want other women to feel pressured to make that decision.*

Problem: *MomsRising reports 16,000 childcare centers closed during the pandemic. A recent report shows that nearly ½ million families are estimated to be stranded without reliable childcare, exacerbating the nation's worker shortage.*

Pre-pandemic, more than 1/2 of families already lived in childcare deserts without safe, nurturing, affordable options to begin with!

Inform about solution: *The economic package currently being negotiated is the only viable opportunity to secure the funding required to support a strong, stable early learning system in America and lower costs for families at this critical moment.*

Call to Action: *Will you fight for working parents by ensuring that critical investments in comprehensive, high-quality childcare and Pre-K for families stay in the reconciliation package?*

Sample Call to Congress (using only “P” and “C”)

Call a
Senator!

Ron
Johnson
(608) 240-
9629

Tammy
Baldwin
(608) 224-
5653

“Hi, I’d like to leave a message for the
Senator, please.

My name is _____.

My zip code is _____.

*Across America, 16,000 childcare
centers closed during the pandemic. A
recent report shows that nearly ½
million families are estimated to be
stranded without reliable childcare. **Will
the Senator ensure critical investments
in comprehensive, high-quality
childcare and Pre-K for families stay in
the reconciliation package?”***

Sample Letters to the Editor

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

FIGHT HUNGER

May 25, 2022

<https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article261598722.html>

I love hearing about mothers helping mothers, as the Los Angeles Times recently noted in a story about lactating moms donating breastmilk during the infant formula shortage. It reminds me how I was moved to start advocating for malnourished children after my baby relied on formula for several days before my breastmilk fully came in. I thought I was doing the right thing by breastfeeding but discovered my baby was starving. Thanks to formula, my child got the calories and nutrients she needed. But I began to understand the desperation of mothers around the world who can't feed their children.

Even before COVID-19, malnutrition was an underlying cause of almost half of all preventable deaths of children under age 5. Because of the pandemic, about 168,000 additional children under 5 are expected to die by the end of 2022, according to one recent study.

We have a chance to help undernourished infants. The Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act is a bipartisan bill calling for a coordinated U.S. Agency for International Development strategy, clear targets and solid interventions so assistance reaches the most impoverished children.

My congresswoman, Rep. Ann Wagner, already signed. Sens. Roy Blunt and Josh Hawley and Reps. Sam Graves and Emanuel Cleaver should join her in co-sponsoring S. 2956/H.R. 4693.

- Cynthia Changyit Levin, Town and Country, Missouri



Your view: Billy Long urged to join global initiative

- Feb 9, 2022

I agree with Raj Jaladi's letter, "U.S. must support global COVID response" (Globe, Jan. 25).

If wealthy nations like the U.S. don't step up efforts to vaccinate the world, more variants will emerge and the world will continue to lose millions of lives and suffer massive economic losses.

In addition to providing \$17 billion in supplemental funding for the 2022 global COVID-19 response, we also need to increase funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria. The Global Fund played a critical role in providing emergency funding, knowledge and resources when a pandemic swept our planet. Still, COVID-19 seriously disrupted healthcare. It caused a backslide in the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria.

The Global Fund has enjoyed strong bipartisan support in Congress for two decades. Congress must ensure President Biden doesn't break tradition in a time of drastically weakened health security. I urge Congressman Billy Long to join his colleague Congresswoman Ann Wagner in signing a letter asking President Biden for an increased pledge to the Global Fund at its 2022 replenishment this fall.

Cynthia Changyit Levin

St. Louis, MO

Sample Op-ed

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

GUEST COMMENTARY

Moms must pay attention to the child tax credit

CYNTHIA CHANGYIT LEVIN

Mar 10, 2022

https://www.columbiamissourian.com/opinion/guest_commentaries/moms-must-pay-attention-to-the-child-tax-credit/article_e6d8c93c-a06a-11ec-b878-cbbb4362acbb.html?fbclid=IwAR35hc_hptamzNJ1wQoLIEGlnCtdXtRJ1B0Qv50WUhc4ClevBnliuyt3pmU

Nothing good ever happens when moms aren't paying attention.

That was true when I was a kid. It was true in my house when I became a mother. It's especially true with Congress in 2022.

Let's face it. Moms have had a lot on their minds over the past two years. It has been overwhelming to provide for our families' needs, look out for the mental health of our kids and track ever-changing COVID-19 policies. With all that going on, it's hard to be attentive to everything happening in Congress affecting the well-being of our children and other parents around us.

However, when we're not looking, needed support tends to disappear and families across the country suffer. We need to sound the alarm, so we can band together and protect effective programs that help families struggling in poverty, like the vanishing child tax credit expansions.

You're not alone if tax policy slid down your list of priorities as we grappled with a COVID-19 surge in December and January. So, let me get you up to speed.

The American Rescue Plan, enacted in March 2021, provided an exceptional tool for decreasing child poverty and food insecurity in America. By increasing the child tax credit, it made the full credit available to all low-income children for the first time and distributed the credit monthly from July through December. Those regular payments reduced monthly child poverty by close to 30% and gave families flexibility to spend the aid on their most basic needs.

Yet just when families faced additional financial troubles from the omicron surge, our government failed them. The Senate, including Sens. Roy Blunt and Josh Hawley, rejected the House-approved "Build Back Better" plan, which would have extended the expansions to the child tax credit for another year.

In December, the child tax credit payments lifted 3.7 million children above the poverty line. Payments have now stopped.

Alarming, the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy reported that the monthly child poverty rate from increased by 41% after losing just one payment in January. Millions of kids are falling back into poverty, putting moms on edge.

Low-income tax credits don't attract much attention from everyday Americans as a tool to fight poverty even though they are highly effective. But here's why this tax policy is important to real people.

U.S. Census Bureau data collected last year found that families who received the child tax credit payments overwhelmingly spent them on immediate necessities such as food, rent, utilities, clothing and car payments. A crisis like a pandemic hits every family differently, so the regular influx of \$250-\$300 per child every month was a godsend. It could take the sting off lost income from a positive COVID-19 test. It was great for kids who needed help right away and good for local economies in need of consumers, too.

When we realize tax credits equate to car repairs to help parents get to work, replacements for kids' outgrown shoes, respite from eviction and food on the table, suddenly tax policy becomes a parenting issue.

If Sens. Blunt and Hawley felt they couldn't support the entire "Build Back Better" plan, then they should find a new way to save the expanded child tax credit. Also, Reps. Bush, Wagner and Luetkemeyer should

come together to save the child tax credit — traditionally a bipartisan issue — which has already done so much to reduce childhood hunger and poverty.

I'm asking my fellow mothers to use all our mom-skills of reminding, chiding, coaxing and demanding to tell Congress they must do something when people need help. Let's challenge them to do better for our children.

Cynthia Changyit Levin, of Town and Country, is the author of "From Changing Diapers to Changing the World: Why Moms Make Great Advocates and How to Get Started."