



## **Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act**

U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) & Susan Collins (R-Maine)

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The federal government's current approach to poverty is not effective enough. Although we have data demonstrating what works, many of the federally funded programs intended to help families are disjointed and difficult to navigate for both families in need and for organizations trying to provide help. While multiple federal programs exist to help low-income parents and children, they have separate funding streams causing silos and fragmentation. Addressing the needs of children and parents separately and without a comprehensive strategy often leaves children or parents behind and diminishes a whole family's chance of success.

The Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act, introduced by U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine), seeks to increase opportunities for families living in poverty through programs targeting both parents and children with support aimed at increasing economic security, educational success, social capital, and health and wellbeing. By aligning and linking existing systems and funding streams, our bill will lead to improved outcomes for parents and children together while improving the effectiveness of service delivery.

Innovative approaches in this legislation will collectively ensure that no matter your zip code, you will have an opportunity to use already existing federal resources or attract private investment to implement the two-generation approach in your community. Specifically, the Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act will give states, local governments, and tribes more flexibility to develop programs that meet their needs.

Support for the two-generation approach has exploded over the past decade and progress has been made in many areas. The previous version of this legislation included two provisions that have since been signed into law. These provisions include a request for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to issue a report exploring the potential for two-generation pilots, potential collaboration areas, and federal funding opportunities. The GAO request was passed as part of the FY 2018 Omnibus (P.L. 115-141). The other provision that is now law is a program to implement Social Impact Partnerships to improve the effectiveness of social services, which was passed as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act (P.L. 115-123) and is administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

### **Increase Flexibility for States, Local Governments and Tribes to Develop Programs That Best Meet Their Needs**

- Two-Generation Performance Partnerships: Federal, state, and local governments will have the ability to test innovative ways of using federal resources by allowing increased flexibility in blending discretionary funds across multiple federal programs in exchange for greater accountability in achieving two-generation outcomes.

## **Coordinate Federal Efforts to Assist in the Development and Implementation of Two-Generation Programs**

The Interagency Council on Multigenerational Poverty and Economic Mobility will create a national focus on multigenerational poverty by facilitating coordinated efforts across multiple agencies and departments. This interagency collaboration will align and link fragmented systems and funding streams, resulting in holistic approaches that simultaneously address the needs of children and their parents or guardians.

The Council brings together designees from multiple agencies and departments, including:

Office of Management and Budget  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Education  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Department of Justice  
Department of Labor

Department of Transportation  
Department of the Treasury  
Department of Veterans  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Corporation for National and Community Service  
Domestic Policy Council  
National Economic Council.

## **Increase Opportunities for Families in Need by Funding Projects that Work**

Successful Two-Generation Programs have the potential to lift families out of poverty by using evidence-based strategies. Examples of this approach include:

- Extending the hours for career services and childhood development programs for students who have young children to better match parents' schedules.
- Expanding home visiting programs to offer information on education, workforce training, and employment opportunities.
- Providing access for low-income students who have young children to career services and childhood development programs through their schools.
- Creating partnerships between private, state, and community colleges and universities with government and non-profit organizations to provide services for low-income students who have young children.
- Allowing programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start to partner with organizations that help the parents of low-income children to further their education and receive job training.

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