As Christian leaders, we believe that our nation's tax policies are fundamentally about values and priorities. Our religious tradition provides a vision for responsible government that serves the common good, not simply the privileged few. This requires those who have succeeded the most to pay their fair share of taxes. It also requires our commitment to public education, quality health care, vital infrastructure investments and programs that protect poor and vulnerable people. Congress will soon vote on tax measures that will have a profound impact on working families and the poor.

We are deeply opposed to any proposal that fails to extend the crucial improvements made in 2009 to refundable tax credits such as the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit. These tax credits help families meet basic needs, reduce poverty, and remove barriers to work. It is hypocritical for lawmakers who talk about family values to abandon improvements in these effective, family-supporting programs. Failing to extend the improved tax credits would jeopardize the economic security and well-being of more than 15 million families and more than 36 million children within those families. This is simply unconscionable.

We are also deeply concerned that some leaders in Washington who oppose extending these improved tax credits are at the same time calling for an extension of Bush-era tax cuts for the wealthiest few. Favoring the wealthiest 2% over working families is irresponsible public policy that fails a basic moral test. We are not economists or tax experts. But this debate is about more than dry statistics or competing fiscal theories. Ultimately, these choices reflect our values and reveal our priorities as a nation. We urge Members of Congress to put families and workers before ideological agendas that favor the powerful.

Mark J. Allman, Religious Theological Studies Department, Merrimack College

David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World

Gerald J. Beyer, Associate Professor of Theology, Saint Joseph's University

Joanna Brooks, Progressive Mormon author

Bishop John R. Bryant, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Jennifer Butler, Executive Director, Faith in Public Life

Nicholas P. Cafardi, Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law, Duquesne University School of Law

Sr. Simone Campbell, Executive Director, NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Tony Campolo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Eastern University

Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network

Rev. Noel Castellanos, Chief Executive Officer, Christian Community Development Association

Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., Editor in Chief, America Magazine

Richard Cizik, President, New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good

Rev. John A. Coleman, S.J., Associate Pastor, St. Ignatius Parish, San Francisco

M. Shawn Copeland, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Boston College

Rev. Chuck Currie, Minister, Sunnyside Church and University Park Church, Portland, Oregon

Nancy Dallavalle, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Department of Religious Studies, Fairfield University

Paula Clayton Dempsey, Minister for Partnership Relations, Alliance for Baptists

Marie Dennis, Co-President, Pax Christi International

Sr. Pat Farrell, OSF, President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Stillman Professor for Roman Catholic Theological Studies, Harvard Divinity School

Rev. Michael Harrison, President, Ohio Baptist State Convention

Rev. Dr. Peter Heltzel, Micah Institute at New York Theological Seminary

Sr. Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Boston College

Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed

John Inglis, Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Cross-appointed to Department of Religious Studies, University of Dayton

Paul Lakeland, Aloysius P. Kelly, S.J. Professor of Catholic Studies, Fairfield University

Rev. Michael Livingston, Director, National Council of Churches Poverty Initiative

Sr. Gayle Lwanga Crumbley, RGS, National Coordinator, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Kathleen Maas Weigert, Assistant to the Provost for Social Justice Initiatives, Loyola University, Chicago

Rev. Steven D. Martin, Executive Director, New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good

Rev. Bryan N. Massingale, Professor of Theological Ethics, Marquette University

Rev. Michael-Ray Mathews, PICO National Network

Gene McCarraher, Associate Professor of Humanities, Villanova University

Sr. Patricia McDermott, RSM, President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Rev. Brian McLaren, Evangelical writer and speaker

Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, American Baptist Churches, USA

Alex Mikulich, Assistant Professor, Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University, New Orleans

Vincent J. Miller, Gudorf Chair in Catholic Theology and Culture, Department of Religious Studies, University of Dayton

Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III, Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness, Washington, DC

David O'Brien, University Professor of Faith and Culture, University of Dayton

William L. Portier, Chair of Catholic Theology, University of Dayton

Christopher Pramuk, Associate Professor of Theology, Xavier University, Cincinnati

Rev. Thomas J. Reese, S.J., Senior Fellow, Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University

Rev. Gabriel Salguero, President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition

Stephen F. Schneck, Director, Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies, The Catholic University of America

Ron Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action

Anthony B. Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Dayton

John Sniegocki, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Xavier University, Cincinnati

Rev. Dr. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Professor of Theology and former President, Chicago Theological Seminary

Terrence W. Tilley, Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., Professor of Catholic Theology and Chair, Theology Department, Fordham University, Bronx

Bishop Edgar L. Vann, Second Ebeneezer Church, Detroit

Jim Wallis, President and CEO, Sojourners

Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada

Todd Whitmore, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, University of Notre Dame

Barbara Williams-Skinner, Founder, Skinner Leadership Institute

Jim Winkler, General Secretary, General Board of Church & Society of the United Methodist Church

Tobias Winright, Associate Professor of Theological Ethics, Saint Louis University

Aidsand Wright-Riggins, III, Executive Director, American Baptist Home Mission Societies