



Senator David Lucas
205-B Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Senator David Lucas,

Thank you for your work bringing attention to the needs of rural Georgia.

One issue that could make a great impact on the livelihood of rural Georgians would be the Georgia Work Credit. The Georgia Work Credit is a state-level earned income tax credit, which would help supplement the federal earned income tax credit that many rural Georgia families currently receive.

As you know, the committee has heard from numerous voices on the importance of spurring economic development in rural counties. We believe that policies that will help rural families keep more of the money they earn is an equally important component of any rural economic development strategy. After all, working rural families who keep more of the money they earn will spend it at local businesses and support home-grown enterprises in their communities. A state level earned income tax credit, similar to one in place in 29 states around the country, would pump millions of dollars into local economies, with most of the benefits occurring in rural counties.

As a volunteer Fellow with the Georgia Women's Policy Institute, I am studying policy solutions that could improve the lives of women in our state. Among many other benefits, a recent study conducted by local researchers found that if the state passes a 10 percent state-level EITC, Georgia would see an 8.4 percent reduction in babies born with low birth weight. The Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families reports that other studies found that the benefits of the federal EITC have also shown improved physical and mental health of moms.

It is important to note that the Georgia Work Credit can only be claimed by people who work, and could potentially put millions back into the local economy when families spend it for household needs and services.

Please let us know if you have any questions. I hope that as part of the important work of your study committee you will consider the merits of the Georgia Work Credit and the impact it could have on the health and well-being of women and children in rural Georgia.

Sincerely,

Katie Smithson
Georgia Women's Policy Institute Fellow
(A Program of the YWCA of Greater Atlanta)