

**By Chris Head and Ben Scott
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My Grandpa once told me a story of when he was a little boy. It was the middle of the Great Depression, and he went with his father to apply for government aid. He remembered the woman clip clopping down the hall in her store bought shoes. Disdain was evident in her voice, as she told them, "People like you should be ashamed." Seventy years later, he remembered his father's response; "If it weren't for people like me, people like you would be people like me."

My grandfather raised my father in the same fashion as he was raised. I too, was brought up to believe in the principles of equality and of democracy. My grandfather could have greatly benefited from a little extra help when he just couldn't make ends meet. Today, we are proposing legislation that will do just that for today's low-income families. An Earned Income Tax Credit that would have provided my grandfather the leg up he needed at the end of the year, and possibly, prevented him from seeking government assistance.

Today I see my grandfather in the many faces my friends and I see volunteering at Wayside Christian Mission, a homeless shelter in Louisville. We work with the children and watch them leave when the parents obtain employment. We see the pride the children feel when they know they are leaving to have a home of their own. I must say it breaks my heart to see the children when they come back, when the job ends, or the money isn't enough for their

parents to provide for the families' needs. Enacting a state EITC would reduce child poverty by 25% and provide these families the opportunity to build and secure long-term wealth. An EITC, while helping families, would also put millions of dollars back into the local economy.

Government assistance should not come at the price of shame for the disadvantaged in our communities. For those who are our working poor, we should place the emphasis on the word "working" and assist them in their quest to pull their families from the grips of despair. Twenty-two states including Indiana and Illinois have already supported their working poor and enacted a state EITC with most of its beneficiaries earning less than \$20,000 annually. This small assistance to our working poor helps them to remain self sufficient and to provide for most of their own needs. With this little extra help, then perhaps there will be fewer children at Wayside.