

## 2025 ParentsTogether Storytelling Cohort



# Fighting for Economic Security for Families

As any parent knows, raising a child in the US can feel impossible. Families go it alone with no paid family leave, skyrocketing child care costs, the end of family-focused pandemic aid, and a general sense from society that their child is their problem. Polling backs this up: 78% of parents say raising a family in the US is getting harder. When asked why, 85% point to rising costs of food and essentials.

In recent months, these costs have only grown as the U.S. economy teeters on the brink of a recession. And now millions of families are facing the very real threat that we could soon see massive cuts to vital programs quite literally keeping them alive like Medicaid, SNAP, and free school meals.

The fact is, it doesn't need to be this hard. There are viable solutions to parents' challenges that have strong parent support. 90% of parents support making child care affordable for every parent; 89% support requiring employers to give parents paid time off to take care of new children; and 81% support continuing the expanded Child Tax Credit. But despite this widespread support, policies like paid leave or the expanded, monthly Child Tax Credit feel completely out of reach as some politicians in Congress continue to prioritize tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy over hard-working families.

ParentsTogether has grown and supported a powerful groundswell of parents determined to create change by shifting the conversation about what is possible for families and building support for the policy solutions that would change the game for American families. Parents across the country have come together to achieve wins for families such as the Summer EBT program which helps families keep food on the table when school is out, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and the PUMP Act.

At the heart of this work are everyday parents who give it their all every single day to give their children the best life possible. The parents in the following pages have stories that are all too common across the United States — and illustrate how vital it is that our leaders actually offer support and relief to millions of families struggling to get by. Their voices are powerful, as is their resolve to fight for economic policies to help all children thrive.



## Taylour Grant

Tampa, Florida

**Issue Areas:** Medicaid/CHIP, SNAP Benefits, Summer EBT, Pregnancy and Postpartum Issues, Affordable Housing

Taylour is a mother of 4 kids ages 11 months, 5 years , 8 years and 11 years old. Her family qualifies for Summer EBT, but with Florida choosing to opt out of Summer EBT, it has left her family strapped for meals during the summer months. Summer months have already proven to be challenging for her family because she has to pay for childcare while she works, and having to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner has meant that groceries go twice as fast during the summer. Taylour fell behind on bills this past summer as a result of having to pay for extra groceries and summer childcare and her family was without hot water for 5 months because she couldn't afford to pay her gas bill. Her eldest daughter has autism and ADD which has turned Taylour into an advocate for her daughter in school to ensure that she receives the proper support and patience she needs from her teachers. Taylour and her children are on Medicaid, and thanks to their coverage they've been able to keep up with doctor visits, therapy services, and afford essential medication. Taylour is currently in school as well as working full-time. Her student loans are on pause while she is enrolled in classes, but she will have to pay \$40k in student debt once she finishes her program.





## Liz Pritchard

Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania

**Issue Areas:** Medicaid/CHIP, Student Debt, Inflation, Affordable Childcare, Healthcare/Prescription Drug Prices, LGBTQ, Sandwich Generation

Liz is a mother of one alongside her wife. She and her wife conceived their son through IVF using a donated embryo. Within the last six months, Liz has been navigating the process of adopting her son. Although she and her wife are both listed on their son's birth certificate, they are concerned about potential changes to their marriage and/or rights under the Trump administration. She and her wife are both mental health professionals and together they started a psychiatric/mental health clinic. Liz and her wife have private health insurance and their son is on CHIP which is a huge help for their family. Liz hopes to shine a light on accessibility to mental health resources for the LGBTQ+ community and more. Some of her biggest concerns as a parent are access to healthcare, education, LGBTQ+ rights, and reproductive justice. Liz and her wife are also full-time caregivers for her mother-in-law who lives at home with them.



## Ciara Romero

Lake Johnson, Texas

**Issue Areas:** Free School Meals, Student Debt, Inflation, Affordable Housing, Affordable Childcare, SNAP Benefits

Ciara is a single mother to her 7-year-old son who is in 1st grade. She co-parents with her ex-husband and is currently in school for her master's in genetics. She works at a pharmacy, but as a parent, she finds it challenging to keep up with the rising costs of food and utilities while also navigating going to school part-time, working full-time, and being a parent full-time. She has found programs like free school lunch to be incredibly helpful for her and her son.

“I am incredibly fortunate to be able to have access to free lunch for my son through his school. They offer it for every student, and it has been a huge help. I have some student debt and that has been a challenge to pay off, especially with the cost of living increasing and my pay staying stagnant. I make too much for SNAP, but without it I've struggled to pay bills on time. After-school child care is incredibly expensive, and if I didn't have access to a non-profit in my community that provides after-school care for a much more affordable cost, I wouldn't have access to care for him. We live too close to the school for him to be bussed home, but it's a half hour walk to the school with a busy street between and he's seven, so I don't feel safe allowing him to walk.”



## Kristin Johnson

Yorktown, Virginia

**Issue Areas:** Inflation, Veterans Affairs, Reproductive Justice

Kristin is a single mom to a 14-year-old daughter based in Yorktown, VA. She is a Navy veteran and currently works for the DoD through a government contract agency. Though she makes what is considered a decent salary, she still finds herself living paycheck to paycheck, having to pay off credit card debt and a high interest rate on her home. This often leaves her with about 10 days out of the month when she cannot afford to buy anything. Her biggest concerns now are that federal funding cuts could potentially impact not only her work, but also her VA benefits.



## Adria Sims-Plummer

Detroit, Michigan

**Issue Areas:** Medicaid, SNAP Benefits, Free School Meals, Inflation, Affordable Housing

Adria is a grandmother and caregiver to her adult daughter. Her daughter lives with a chronic mental illness that has left Adria to care for both her daughter and her 9-year-old grandson. Adria also lives with a chronic illness that has led her to be on disability. Because she is unable to work, her family relies on the help of programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and free school lunch. Recently, her family has struggled to afford housing, food, and utilities. Her biggest concern right now is possibly losing access to the programs keeping her family afloat due to the federal funding cuts. Since she physically cannot work, Adria does not have many options left to help her family thrive, given their circumstances.