

Subsidies for Humans Being

Re-Framing Government Assistance Programs as Investments in PEOPLE

The Blue Paper Project: message message

STATUS QUO

Government subsidies help power the American economy. This is fact. Oil & Gas depends on favorable tax policy to make exploration profitable. Tech giants use R&D credits to finance investments that may not pay off for years. Industrial agriculture is sustained by federal support that stabilizes prices and guarantees food supply. Stadiums, highways, and airports - pillars of local commerce - are often built with government-backed financing.

For the most part, we don't question these outlays. We call them "economic development" for good reason: they reduce risk, accelerate growth, and strengthen industries against global competition. Yet, when similar supports are extended to households, that logic vanishes. Government programs like **food assistance, housing support, or the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are stigmatized as hand-outs, instead of being recognized as subsidies for the human side of the economy.** The result: billions flow freely to corporations, while the workforce that powers those very entities are left with, at best, piecemeal or temporary support.

IMAGINE MORE

What if we gave our human workforce the same economic weight as we give industry? After all, the case for "human subsidies" is not just a moral argument – it's a financial win/win. When the CTC was temporarily expanded, every \$1 invested returned between \$8-\$10 in measurable social and economic benefits. It was estimated to have increased consumer spending by \$27 billion, generating not only profits for corporations, but nearly \$2 billion in state and local revenues. It created over half a million full-time jobs. Studies of Paid Family Leave (PFL) laws have shown similar dividends - a roughly 5% increase in productivity at businesses covered by new leave requirements - a boost compounded by a savings on employee turnover, since replacing a worker often costs more than 20% of their replacement's annual salary. Free school lunch programs improve educational performance and long-term earnings - today's meal translating directly into tomorrow's productivity gains. Tuition-free community college would reduce student debt burdens while producing a skilled and educated workforce, fueling innovation and entrepreneurship. Music and art programs uncover talents and beauty, and develop empathy and community. **Measured strictly as ROI, subsidies for people deliver some of the highest yields available through public policy.** Just as business subsidies build industries, human subsidies build the nation those industries thrive in. (See companion Blue Paper ONE GENERATION).

GAME ON

America should not have to choose between businesses and people. We already subsidize capital at scale; let's subsidize labor with that same confidence and swagger. Make the CTC permanent as a stable source of consumer demand; ensure every child has access to free meals at school; offer community college without tuition barriers; and guarantee PFL to help create a valued and motivated workforce and reduce business costs.

We need to change the language we use. Moving forward, these supports should be referred to as HUMAN SUBSIDIES and Investments in America. The economics are clear: when we subsidize people, we expand productivity, reduce long-term costs, and create a more competitive economy. If corporate subsidies are an investment in markets, then "people subsidies" are an investment in the marketplace itself - workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, taxpayers. Let's change the message. Let's begin speaking of human subsidies as **the most vital investment in America's future.** A nation that invests only in companies risks hollowing out its own workforce, but investing in that workforce will ensure we have growth that is sustainable, inclusive, and strong. **Let's put Americans first.**

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