

**(Letter to Churches)**

January 21, 2004

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing to ask for your help with an important concern that affects thousands of working families in our district each tax season. This issue involves the millions of dollars in federal tax refunds that families in our community currently fail to receive, especially under the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

In 2001, working families in Nashville claimed more than \$56 million in EITC refunds. This money provided vital support not only to working families in Nashville but to local businesses and communities.

Nevertheless, nearly \$5 million in refunds is left on the table each year by families unaware of their eligibility for a refund. In addition, many thousands of taxpayers fail to receive the full amount of their refunds because they pay hundreds of dollars in fees to expensive commercial tax preparers. The total amount of tax preparation fees diverted from taxpayers' pockets is as high as \$2 million in Davidson County—money that could otherwise pay for groceries, utilities and other necessities.

As the leader of your congregation, you play a central role in providing the members of your congregation with information important to them. Please help me in reaching the people of our district with an important message—that they deserve to receive the full amount of the refunds they have earned, and that there are resources available to help them claim the full amounts they are due.

*Information available on my website, [www.cooper.house.gov](http://www.cooper.house.gov), provides help to families on the free taxpayer clinics available as well as broad guidelines on who is eligible for the credit.*

The importance of these tax credits can't be overestimated. In the coming year, families with two children earning less than \$33,692 can receive as much as \$4,204 in refunds. Each year, the EITC lifts nearly 5 million working families over the poverty line.

*Your help is vital to ensure that the families in our community don't lose out. I look forward to working with you this year to help the families of our district get the refunds they deserve.*

Sincerely,

Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress