

# Conference Call Summary

## Introduction

Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Washington, DC)

- Happy New Year!
- [Conference Call slides](#) are available in the Take Action section of the RESULTS Home Page
- Remind folks that we will go to 12:50, then groups that choose to hop off can go through the planning process on their own, or stay on and Jos will guide you through the process.
- If during your planning you have a question, you can call back in (888-409-6709) and tell the operator you have a question for Meredith Dodson on the RESULTS call. The operator will put you into Meredith's direct line – you will not rejoin the ongoing call. Meredith will be available until 1:45pm ET.
- Thank you for all your great work in 2014 and looking forward to an exciting 2015
- Stressing the importance of group planning and how it figures into RESULTS' success

## Guest Speaker: Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN-5)

Facilitated by Meredith Dodson

### Biography of Congressman Ellison

Congressman Keith Ellison represents Minnesota's 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, which includes the city of Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs. He first took office in January of 2007. Rep. Ellison's guiding philosophy is based on "generosity and inclusion" and his priorities in Congress are building prosperity for working families, promoting peace, pursuing environmental sustainability, and advancing civil and human rights.

As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, the congressman helps oversee the nation's financial services and housing industries, as well as Wall Street. He also serves on the House Democratic Steering & Policy Committee, which decides committee assignments for Democratic Members and sets the Democratic Caucus' policy agenda.

Rep. Ellison was elected co-chair of the [Congressional Progressive Caucus for the 113th Congress](#) that promotes the progressive promise of fairness for all. He is also a member of the [Congressional Black Caucus](#), founded the Congressional Consumer Justice Caucus, and belongs to more than a dozen other caucuses that focus on issues ranging from social inclusion to environmental protection.

Before being elected to Congress Rep. Ellison was a noted community activist and ran a thriving civil rights, employment, and criminal defense law practice in Minneapolis. He also was elected to serve two terms in the Minnesota State House of Representatives.

Keith was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He has lived in Minnesota since 1990 and is the proud father of four children.

### Remarks by Congressman Ellison

- Thank all of the advocates and fighters for people in this county on the call
- Key to remember that people struggle to survive in richest country in world
- President Obama is right: income inequality defining issue of our time

- Richest county in history of world – we've never been richer
- In the past when we were not as rich as we are today (based on per capita income), we made sure there was an American Dream, ramp to middle class. Invested in college affordability, infrastructure, etc.
- Concept that we cannot afford these investments is not true
- We need people to say it vocally
  - Can't just be Congress and national leaders (Rev. Barber, Sister Simone Campbell)
  - We all need to speak out
- We are at a unique moment in history: general consensus, need to correct our economy since out of control
- Lessons from minimum wage battles:
  - Even in red states like AR and AK minimum wage increased (even when Democrats lost)
  - Cities increasing minimum wage: Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco
  - Take min wage as symbol of how people are feeling – concerned about economy
  - Pres. Obama concerned, federal contractors now make \$10.10 – because strikers pushing across the country
- What we should do:
  - Barbara Lee Half in Ten bill: federal interagency working group to implement strategy
  - Expand EITC, and college tax credit, and American Opportunity Tax Credit
  - If we do tax extenders, need to support tax credits for those who are struggling
- I plan to reintroduce: Employee Empowerment Act
  - 1956: 35% unionization, 1 worker could feed family of 4
  - Now workers get intimidated
  - Bill says workers would have protection in Civil Rights Act (now National Labor Relations Board – and get penalized for any money earned during time period)
  - Labor rights are civil rights!
- Housing:
  - Low-income families being pushed out of the housing market
  - Poor people work, and they need housing
  - Common Sense Housing Act: mortgage interest deduction > 15% credit, puts savings into Section 8, low-income/public housing
  - \$200 billion for affordable rental support
  - Every \$1 in rental assistance: \$4 in homeownership – and subsidize wealthy (see [Conference Call slide 8](#))
    - Completely wrong, not what we should be doing

- No way that President Obama and Congress can address poverty or other issues without dedicated advocates fighting for American Dream.
  - They can only do what public gives appetite to do
  - Your work is key to success
  - Hope to stay in very close touch with all of you
- **Question from RESULTS volunteer Paul (Twin Cities/Eagan):** appreciate what you do, our RESULTS volunteers include Native Americans in cities and up north in MN – will organize visit as you requested. How can we raise profile for these issues? (housing, EITC, etc.)
  - Rep. Ellison: “It’s time to task”
  - Have to be relentless – never know what will capture attention but have to knock on door every day
  - Use every tool to get word out: email, Facebook, Twitter
  - Ask every officeholder what they are doing about poverty
  - Engage low-income people in their own fight: can’t let members of Congress who don’t worry where they will sleep be the voice
  - My job is to leverage the voice of low-income people in their fight
  - Need diverse low-income people: recent immigrants, poor rural Whites, etc.
  - It is a lie that low-income people don’t work: they cooked your meal, made your hotel bed. Poor people are working hard!
  - No one big thing to do
  - In addition, media doesn’t want to report on poverty issues
  - Link issues that don’t seem related: #BlackLivesMatter movement (we know that All Lives Matter)
    - Eric Garner killed selling cigarettes – wouldn’t be doing that if had living wage job.
    - Negative interactions between citizens and police b/c people are poor.
    - Ferguson: factories left St. Louis (because of NAFTA) and unemployment went 8% to 13% in last decade, those working have lower wages, poverty increases, and people hanging on corner – police pulled in to regulate the poor.
    - Link poverty and law enforcement – I am grateful for the police (though think Officer Wilson in MO was wrong).
- Fight will be won outside of DC – folks who care and are passionate will make the difference. I’m in DC 4/7 days/week, we rely on you to be our information line.

## 2015 U.S. Poverty Campaigns Overview

Meredith Dodson

### 1. Continue our multi-year Economic Mobility campaign.

- Policy work focused on protecting and expanding **the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC)** for low-income working families but in a broader framework of tax fairness and addressing inequality

- These tax credits are our nation's **most successful anti-poverty programs for children** – they [lifted 8.8 million Americans out of poverty in 2013](#).
  - Key EITC and CTC provisions are set to expire in 2017. If they do, about [17 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty](#).
  - Create talking points and template materials for RESULTS presentations on **inequality and the racial wealth gap** (see [Conference Call slides](#))
  - Since Congress primarily focused on corporate tax legislation, no real opportunity to move asset-building legislation in 2015-2016 so less work on the **Financial Security Credit**
- 2. Food For Thought: Protecting Nutrition Programs.** Primarily focused on protecting the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP, formerly food stamps), also possibly WIC and other programs in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization.
- Deep threats to SNAP in budget process, especially “reconciliation”
  - Congress could also once again cut SNAP funding as a way to pay for Child Nutrition Reauthorization, as it did in 2010.

## Announcements

Jos Linn, Grassroots Manager, U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Des Moines, IA)

- Remember that next month on February 14, we will host a national outreach event with *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author [Nicholas Kristof](#). This will be a joint call with our global poverty volunteers and a great opportunity to invite new people to get involved with RESULTS. The event is on our normal conference call day, **Saturday, February 14 at 2:00pm ET**. As you do your planning today, please plan to use this event in your outreach plans. This is a ready-made event that will be easy for you to use to grow your group. We'll have materials and additional information for you in the coming weeks. We are also hosting two training calls in the coming weeks to help you with your outreach for this specific event. We'll talk about who you can reach out to in your community about this event, how to get them in the room, and strategies to use this event to grow your group. The trainings will be Tuesday, January 13 at 9:00 pm ET and Wednesday, January 21 at 1:00 pm ET. To join this online meeting, go to <http://fuze.me/27334294>. To join by phone, dial (201) 479-4595 and enter meeting ID 27334294.
- Also, the 2015 RESULTS International Conference is **July 18-21, 2015** in Washington, DC. Be sure to include attending the conference in your group planning as well. Registration is now open at: <http://www.cvent.com/d/vYIVLWMJSEOINhuqvD6jKQ/Il3m/P1/1Q>.
- **Learn How to Effectively Research Your Members of Congress.** Join our popular “Researching Your Members of Congress” training to show you how to get helpful information on the background, voting record, and issue positions for your members of Congress. The trainings are Wednesday, January 14 at 9:00 pm ET and again on Thursday, January 15 at 1:00 pm ET. To join online, go to <http://fuze.me/27200038>. To join by phone, dial (201) 479-4595, meeting ID 27200038.
- **Join Budget Battles Webinar on January 22 at 1:00 pm ET.** The [Coalition on Human Needs](#) and [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) will host a webinar to help you

understand what's at risk for vital anti-poverty programs in the new Congress and steps you can take to protect them. Register at:

<https://chn.peachnewmedia.com/store/seminar/seminar.php?seminar=33869>.

- Also, encourage people you know to get involved with RESULTS. Invite them to attend our next Intro Call this **Wednesday, January 14 at 9:00 pm ET**. You can find a link to the [Intro Call registration form](#) on the RESULTS Homepage.
- Also, the RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents will be having their final support call of 2014 next week. The calls are this **Tuesday, December 20 at 1:00 pm and 8:00 pm ET**. Note the different time for the evening call this month. To join, go to: <http://fuze.me/27491886>; to join by phone, dial (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID: 27491886.
- You can find these events and others on our [RESULTS Events Calendar](#) on the RESULTS website.

## 2015 Group Planning

Jos Linn

Group Planning is about success. As the old adage goes: a goal without a plan is only a wish. Goal setting is an important part of RESULTS' history and is an big factor in your advocacy and outreach successes over the years. Just look at 2014. All of you did a wonderful job in your RESULTS work. You had a record year on face-to-face meeting and our second most productive year on media, and those don't count the thousands of e-mails, letters, phone calls and other contacts you made. You can bet your work in 2014 helped President Obama and House Democrats protect the EITC and CTC from that bad tax bill right before the holidays.

Now it's on to this year. On today's call, we're going to go through the 2015 Group Planning process. The goal today is for you to finish today and send in your plans to me when you're done. Even if you have to finish up some stuff later, send me what you have now and then resubmit your finished plan later. So here's what you'll need for today.

- Your completed [Individual Planning Form](#). Hopefully, each person in your group completed this before the call and has it with them. You'll refer to it during planning.
- A copy of the [Group Plan Summary](#). This is what you will fill out on the call today. You can fill it out by hand or pull it up on your computer and type in the information.
- You can find these and other group planning materials at [the link](#) in the PowerPoint on slide 18.

At this point of the call, you have a choice. If your group wants to walk through the planning process with staff, like we did last year, stay on the line and we'll get started in a minute. For those groups who want to finish you planning today but at your own pace, at this time you are welcomed to hop off the call and get rolling. If you have questions during your planning, you can dial back in (888) 409-6709 and ask for Meredith; you'll be put into a separate line with her only to answer your question. She will be available to help you until 1:45pm ET. If you are signing off, thank you for calling in today, good planning to you all, and please make sure to send me your plans when you're done today. Send it to [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org).

- OK, for those of you on the call, let's jump right in. You should have your Group Plan Summary out and ready to begin. First off, again, you all had a great year last year! Congratulations on the successes you achieved, which you can see on slide 14. To set the stage for another successful year, **let's take 5 minutes to reflect on the success your**

**group achieved in 2014. Celebrate and congratulate each other for your accomplishments.**

- Now on to 2015!

### **Section A of the Group Plan Summary: About Your Group**

- First thing is for you and for us to know about your group. We want to know what city you're in, what congressional districts you cover, and the members of your group. Please be sure to fill in the contact information for *everyone* in your group (and include those who could not make it to the call today). Keeping in touch with one another is an important part of being a successful group so make sure your contact info is current.
- Part of this section also includes leadership roles. We encourage everyone in the group to take a leadership role. This lets each person take ownership of the group. You can see a partial list of roles listed there on the form. You don't have to fill all of them listed there but it is important that the group assigns a group leader or leaders, point persons for members of Congress (and please list the legislator's name), a media point person, and an action network manager. You can see other roles you might want to fill on the Individual Planning Form. Hopefully, some of you already indicated roles you'd like to take on on that form..
- Also, we also urge you to **designate a contact person** so people who visit our website can find you. We recommend you create a generic group e-mail (e.g. [RESULTSDesMoines@gmail.com](mailto:RESULTSDesMoines@gmail.com)) so you don't have to change your group contact e-mail if your contact person changes.
- **OK, let's take 8 minutes to fill out Section A of the Group Plan Summary.** To make this process run quickly, while you're talking about roles, pass the Summary form around the table and let each person fill in their contact info.

### **Section B of the Group Plan Form: Group Health**

- Section B is designed to articulate ways you can keep your group strong and healthy. First and foremost, you'll want to decide when you're meeting. We encourage all groups to meet twice per month, with one of those meetings being the national conference call. We've found that connecting with each other more than once per month makes your advocacy more effective and your group stronger.
- You also want to look at the size of your group right now and where you want to be at year's end. Groups that grow are groups that last and we urge you to think about ways you can grow your groups. This is a great section to think about our February 14 National Outreach Event with Nicholas Kristof. This is a ready-made event to help you attract new people to your local group. Please include this event in your outreach plans.

**OK, let's take 6 minutes to fill out Questions 1 and 2 of Section B.**

- Also in section B, we want you to think about fundraising. Non-profits like RESULTS are dependent on fundraising. Donations to RESULTS pay for conference calls, the staff who support you in this work, the materials and website you use to take action and do outreach, the International Conference, and a host of other things to make our work possible. Whether you're hosting a house party, asking for online donations through our Friends and Family Campaign, or organizing a big event, every little bit helps. So we ask you to consider helping fundraise for RESULTS and articulate what you want to do in the form. The more details you provide on your plans, the better we can support you achieving them.

- Also, **how will you grow your local Action Network?** (people who take action at important times) Thinks of ways you can include more people in this network and thus magnify your voice.
- Finally, we are excited about the **2015 RESULTS International Conference**, which is July 18-21 in Washington, DC. This truly is the biggest event of the year for RESULTS. It not only gives you the chance to lobby members of Congress in DC itself, it also gives you the opportunity to connect with other advocates from around the world. As mentioned earlier, we're thrilled that Jeffrey Sachs and Sister Simone Campbell will join us this and we'll have more great speakers to announce soon. We want to see all of our U.S. Poverty groups represented so please plan to come. [Registration is now open](#). If you're not sure you can attend but would like to, put your name down. That will let us know to work with you and your group on ways to make it happen.

**Now take 6 minutes to fill out Questions 3, 4 and 5 of Section B.**

### **Section C of the Group Plan Summary: Members of Congress**

- Now let's look at your members of Congress. Your group should have at least 3 – two senators and a representative, although some groups cover more than one Rep.
- You'll first want to **list your members of Congress** by name and **where they are on the Champion Scale** for U.S. Poverty issues. You can see the Champion Scale on slide 26.
- **You'll also want to identify what strategies you will use** to move your members of Congress up the Champion Scale this year. Is it doing more face-to-faces? Perhaps is getting to know their tax or nutrition aides better? Maybe you want to set up a site visit to a local food bank or tax preparation site? Whatever ways you can educate, influence, and build stronger relationships with your members of Congress, include it here. And please be specific with each members of Congress. Also if you run out of room on this page, feel free to continue your member of Congress plan under section E of the Plan Summary.
- Finally, when **will you submit a face-to-face meeting request** for each one of your members of Congress? We want to get at least 120 face-to-face meetings in 2015 and we'll do that by starting now. As Meredith mentioned earlier, this month's action is about getting those meeting requests in now. With so many new members of Congress and new priorities with new congressional leadership, the sooner you sit down with all your reps and senators, the better.
  - House recess: January 15-19
  - House and Senate recess: February 14-22
- See the [January 2015 U.S. Poverty Action](#) for tips on scheduling face-to-face meetings and using the Champion Scale
- **So let's take 10 minutes to fill out the Members of Congress Section (Section C) of the Group Plan Form.**

### **Section D of the Group Plan Summary: Media**

- Finally, let's look at media. We want to keep up our media success of the past two years with another strong media year in 2015. Our goal is to get 134 media pieces published. How many of those will come from your group? Media plays such an important role in our work. Don't be shy. Make those local papers get to know you. Be sure to include the media outlets you want to work with in your plan. Also, if you're looking to branch out to other

outlets like radio and TV, or doing more on social media, we have a place in the form to articulate those goals too.

- **Let's take 8 minutes to complete the Media Section (Section D) of the Group Plan Form.**

Section E is for any other ideas or goals you have for your group that you want to include in your plan. It can also be used for things you ran out of room with earlier in your plan. We won't take time to fill that out on the call so take a few minutes after you hang up to add anything you want into Section E.

***And you're done! Woo-hoo!***

## **Questions and How to Submit Your Group Plans**

Jos Linn

Thank you for going through this process. We know that for some of you, this is tedious. But it is also amazingly inspiring. Think about it, how many volunteer organizations you've worked with have you sit down each year and ask you to set your own action goals? Who ask you to be creative in how you make a difference? Not many, I imagine. There's power in planning and please know even if you don't enjoy this process, we are extremely grateful for you having done it. Give yourselves a very big pat on the back for your work. We look forward to reading the bold and amazing things you have planned for 2015!

We know that this was fast and if you want to take time after the call today to finish things up, please do. However, **once you're done today, please send a copy of your plan to Jos Linn as soon as possible.** Jos is hoping to see his Inbox full of plans on Monday morning. **You can e-mail them to Jos at [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org).** If you wrote it out by hand, just scan it and send it as an e-mail attachment. If you're not sure how to get it to Jos, e-mail him with your question and he'll work with you.

So now let's take a breather and celebrate. Operator, please open all the lines and less all wish each other a very Happy and Inspiring New Year!

# **Happy New Year!**