



### [President Biden Signs a Massive Foreign Aid Package While U.S. Poverty Rates Rise](#)

This week, President Biden signed a huge \$95 billion foreign aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, that includes further weapons for Israel as it continues its more than six-month War on Gaza. The military aid to Israel component of the bill is especially questionable at a time when it faces serious and credible accusations of human rights violations, but on top of concern regarding certain elements of the aid package, sending such a massive amount of money for foreign purposes while significant domestic challenges exist such as rising U.S. poverty rates is also worth critiquing. Late last year, subject matter experts reported that the U.S. poverty rate saw its largest one-year increase in history, jumping a whopping 5 percentage points. Additionally, child poverty was found to have more than doubled from the year before, according to the most recent data. Analysts highlight that the United States had experienced notable improvements in poverty reduction during the preceding two years prior to last year's figures. One of the main reasons for the shift was that safety net programs like expanded child tax credits had lifted millions of Americans out of poverty and provided critical assistance to low-income households, and as these types of programs were allowed to expire, poverty rates began to rise again.

Economists have outlined that child poverty in the United States would have been nearly 50% lower in the most recent year of data if these safety net programs had remained in place. Researchers have also found that these mechanisms had a serious and direct impact in both poverty reduction and poverty severity levels. The progress that had been made towards lifting children out of poverty in the early days of the Biden administration has slowed down, as has governmental support for finding child care. Furthermore, data shows that low-income Americans are even worse off financially than they were at the height of the Covid crisis back in 2020 and 2021. To help explain all of this, observers assert that too often, some lawmakers seem to be more concerned with foreign aid spending than government spending on domestic programs. As such, they point to the fact that American social programs are in need of funding – money that frequently ends up being prioritized in foreign aid packages and legislation. Thus, social spending tends to get squeezed out while large proportions of the overall budget are designated for military programs and usage. This has prompted some lawmakers to urge that Congress stop funneling taxpayer dollars into a revolving door of endless wars, and instead give precedence to investing in addressing domestic concerns.

Lawmakers and government officials have long sought to find a balance between oversized government and a shortage in vital programs and resources. Along with this, there is also the important task of weighing foreign expenditures with domestic ones, and it is no surprise that more of the former can have a detrimental impact on the latter. It is reasonable to suspect that at least some of the billions of dollars in foreign military aid and assistance provided on a regular basis, a small portion of which would amount to a hefty chunk, might be better administered to address domestic challenges here at home. This is particularly true when there is growing outcry regarding the abusive manner in which that foreign military aid is being used, hence Israel's actions in Gaza. With respect to the recently signed foreign aid package, one can make the case that while the military support for Ukraine and Taiwan would be used for defensive purposes, Israel is waging a military offensive on Gaza that has killed tens of thousands of civilians, decimated the enclave, resulted in a deplorable humanitarian crisis, and elicited increasing criticism here in the United States and around the world.