

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the Illinois Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in Illinois. As Illinois community and faith leaders, service providers, and advocates for meeting human needs, we strongly urge you to vote to invest in healthy children, educated workers, and secure families and seniors.

First, 154,000 uninsured children in Illinois urgently need you to vote to override the President's veto of the SCHIP bill (Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, H.R. 976). These children and all the others who are now healthier because of SCHIP are depending on your vote. Our children cannot learn and thrive if they do not get the health care they need. We will look to your vote to override the SCHIP veto as a true demonstration of your commitment to our state's children.

You will also be voting soon on vital domestic appropriations bills. Please support investments in services that provide our people with opportunity and protect them from harm. The choices before you are stark. We hope the appropriations bills headed towards completion will preserve or expand:

- Head Start, child care, and education from birth through college;
- job training and employment services so our youth and adult workers can get ahead;
- community health centers, maternal and child health services, rural health, and mental health programs;
- services to address family violence, juvenile justice, and the prevention of child abuse or neglect;
- nutrition help for children (Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program) and the elderly (Commodity Supplemental Food Program);
- services to strengthen communities through the Community Services Block Grant; and
- affordable housing and home energy assistance to provide stability for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and families.

Vetoes threatened by the President are aimed at cutting these services. We strongly urge you to vote for domestic appropriations bills including Labor-HHS-Education, Transportation-HUD, Commerce-Justice-Science, and Agriculture, and to override such destructive vetoes.

So much is at stake for Illinois. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for Illinois' communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in Illinois' future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 944 more children in Illinois to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 257 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$108 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in Illinois. Although 450,268 households have trouble putting enough food on the table in Illinois, a Presidential veto would be aimed at preventing 5 new states from being part of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and still worse, would stop 13,500 elderly now participating in Illinois from receiving food packages. We hope the House version of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is adopted. In marked contrast, despite soaring energy prices, a veto could mean 76,300 fewer Illinois households will get the help they need to pay their utilities in 2008 than in 2001.

Our neighbors, our children, and the communities we live in and serve all count on you to vote for critically important investments and to reject the cuts the President's vetoes would require. We believe these votes – for SCHIP and human needs appropriations – are among the most important you will cast.

Sincerely,

Adorers of the Blood of Christ -Justice and Peace Office, Red Bud
 AFSCME Council 31, Chicago
 AIDS Foundation of Chicago
 Arab American Family Services, Burbank
 Bridge Communities, Inc., Glen Ellyn
 Bright Futures for Families, Roodhouse
 C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation, Effingham
 Center for Economic Progress, Chicago
 Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, Chicago
 Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation
 Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
 Chicago Foundation for Women
 Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues
 Chicago Jobs Council
 Citizen Action Illinois
 Dominican Sisters of Springfield
 Easter Seals Peoria-Bloomington
 Embarras River Basin Agency, Inc., Greenup
 Equip for Equality, Chicago
 Families Helping Families, Naperville
 Family Focus Aurora
 First Church of the Brethren of Chicago
 Good Shepherd Congregation, Springfield
 Grace United Methodist Church, Naperville
 Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights, Chicago
 Heartland Community and Treatment Services, Chicago
 Holy Family Parish, Inverness
 Housing Action Illinois
 Human Support Services, Red Bud
 Illinois Action for Children
 Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies
 Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 Illinois Conference of Churches
 Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
 Illinois Head Start Association
 Illinois Hunger Coalition
 Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
 Illinois PTA
 Interfaith Workers Rights Center, Chicago
 Jesuit Volunteer Corps: Magis Community of Chicago
 Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office Wheaton Franciscans
 Lutheran Social Services of Illinois/Lutheran Advocacy-Illinois
 Mid Central Community Action, Inc., Bloomington
 Muslim Women Resource Center, Chicago
 National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Public Affairs
 Oak Park Regional Housing Center

Oral Health America, Chicago
Pax Christi, Chicago
Pax Christi, Arlington Heights
Pax Christi, Western Springs
Pax Christi St. Gertrude, Chicago
People for Community Recovery, Chicago
Project IRENE, Berwyn
Protestants for the Common Good, Chicago
Renaissance Social Services, Chicago
Sacred Heart Franciscan Province JPIC, Countryside
Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Sinsinawa Dominican Peace and Justice Office, Forest Park
Sisters of Mercy Regional Community of Chicago
Sisters of St. Benedict, Rock Island
St Peter's Church in the Loop, Chicago
St. Clair County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
St. Isidore Peace and Justice Ministry, Bloomingdale
St. James Peace & Justice Committee, Arlington Heights
St. Paul United Church of Christ, Waterloo
St. Thomas Parish, Warrensville
Stopping Woman Abuse Now, Olney
University Lutheran Church, Evanston
United Methodist Church, Naperville
Voices for Illinois Children
Wabash Area Development, Inc., Enfield
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Mary Wood Branch, Springfield
YWCA of Alton
YWCA of Aurora
YWCA of Bloomington
YWCA of Canton
YWCA of Decatur and Macon County
YWCA of Elgin
YWCA of Evanston/North Shore
YWCA of Kankakee
YWCA of Lake County
YWCA Loves Park
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
YWCA Pekin
YWCA of Peoria
YWCA of Quad Cities
YWCA of Quincy
YWCA of Rockford
YWCA of the Sauk Valley
YWCA of Springfield
YWCA of the University of Illinois