

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the Michigan Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in Michigan. As Michigan 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, 80,900 uninsured children in Michigan 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 Michigan. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for Michigan's communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in Michigan's future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 835 more children in Michigan to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 310 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$115 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in Michigan. Although 453,215 households have trouble putting enough food on the table in Michigan, 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 73,900 elderly now participating in Michigan 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 108,700 fewer Michigan 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,

Albion Volunteer Service Organization
Alger-Marquette Community Action Board
Aquinas College, Grand Rapids
Bay Area Women's Center, Bay City
Benzie - Leelanau District Health Department
Catholic Alabare Prayer Group, Saginaw
Catholic Community Response Team, Pontiac
Catholic Social Services of Oakland County
Center for Civil Justice, Saginaw
Center for the Education of Women, Ann Arbor
Citizens for Peace, Northville
Coalition For Independence Through Education (CFITE), Farmington Hills
Common Ground Sanctuary, Waterford
Common Ground Sanctuary, Southfield
Comstock Community Center, Kalamazoo
Detroit Metropolitan Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues
Disability Network of Mid-Michigan
District Health Department # 10, Cadillac
Dominican Sisters: Adrian Crossroads Chapter
Dominicans of Grand Rapids
East Side Soup Kitchen, Saginaw
Flint Jewish Federation
Head Start, Weidman
Home for Peace and Justice, Saginaw
Human Development Commission, Caro
Kent County Committee on Permanency Planning
Lawrence Avenue United Methodist Church, Charlotte
Leadership Council of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart, Monroe
Leslie United Congregational Church of Christ, Rives Junction
Lincoln Middle School, Ypsilanti
Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children - Macomb County
Michigan Citizen Action
Michigan Community Action Agency Association
Michigan Jewish Conference
Michigan League for Human Services
Michigan Public Health Association
Michigan's Children
Mid Michigan Community Action
Mustard Seed Shelter, Saginaw
National Council of Jewish Women, Michigan State Public Affairs
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section
Newaygo County People for Peace
North Detroit RESULTS
Oakland County Human Services Community Collaborative Council
Oakland County Welfare Rights

Pax Christi USA, Fremont
Pax Christi USA, Auburn Hills
Pax Christi USA, Concord
Pax Christi USA, Lansing
RESULTS, Kalamazoo
Ruth Ellis Center, Highland Park
Saginaw Intermediate School District Head Start
Sisters and Daughters of Sheba International, Detroit
Sisters of Mercy Leadership Team, Farmington Hills
Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe
St. Clair County Health Department
St. John Health, Fraser
St. Luke N.E.W. Life Center, Flint
Stanwood Free Methodist Church, Stanwood
Synergy Partners, LLC, Detroit
United Auto Workers, Caledonia
United Way for Southeastern Michigan
United Way of Midland County-First Call for Help
United Way Volunteer Resource Center, Essexville
University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor
Wayne County Asset Building Coalition
YWCA of Berrien County
YWCA West Central Michigan
YWCA Western Wayne County