

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the North Carolina Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in North Carolina. As North Carolina 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, 116,000 uninsured children in North Carolina 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 North Carolina. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for North Carolina's communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in North Carolina's future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 451 more children in North Carolina to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 270 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$147 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in North Carolina. Although 443,652 households have trouble putting enough food on the table in North Carolina, 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 1,300 elderly now participating in North Carolina 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 52,200 fewer North Carolina 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,

Action for Children North Carolina
Advocacy for the Poor, Inc., Winston-Salem
Children and Family Services Association -NC
Children First of Buncombe County
Coastal Community Action, Inc., Newport
CodePink, Wilmington
Fiscal Progress, Raleigh
Good Work, Inc., Durham
Legal Services of Southern Piedmont, Charlotte
MDC, Inc., Chapel Hill
New Opportunities Day Treatment, Wilmington
North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children
North Carolina Fair Share
North Carolina Housing Coalition
Our Lady of Consolacion Catholic Church, Huntersville
PMG ASSOCIATES LLC, Raleigh
RESULTS Chapel Hill
RESULTS Asheville
Rural Health Group - WIC Program, Roanoke Rapids
St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Andrews
SEED Initiative, CFED – Expanding Economic Opportunity, Durham
Urban Ministries of Wake County
WNC Peace Coalition, Marshall
YWCA Central Carolinas, Charlotte
YWCA Greensboro
YWCA of Winston-Salem