

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the New Jersey Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in New Jersey. As New Jersey 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, 100,000 uninsured children in New Jersey 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 New Jersey. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for New Jersey's communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in New Jersey's future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 347 more children in New Jersey to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 222 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$99 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in New Jersey. 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 38,400 fewer New Jersey 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,

ACCSES New Jersey
AFSCME-AFL-CIO, Trenton

Alliance for Disabled in Action, Edison
 Alliance for Disabled in Action, Manalapan
 Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities (ABCD), Hamilton
 American Arab Forum, Denville
 Association for Children of New Jersey
 Back Home Again, Asbury Park
 Bergen County Board of Social Services
 Bergen County Monday Morning
 Catholic Charities, East Orange
 Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton
 Church and Society Committee, Sparta United Methodist Church
 Coalition for Peace and Justice, Linwood
 Community Food Bank of New Jersey
 Conquer Hunger & Needy Together, Inc, Neptune
 CUMAC/ECHO (Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community/Ecumenically Concerned
 Helping Others), Inc., Paterson
 Cumberland County Board of Social Services
 CWA Local 1081, Newark
 Displaced Homemakers Network of NJ, Inc.
 Family Service Association of New Jersey
 Glen Rock League of Women Voters
 Gray Panthers of South Jersey
 Hispanic Development Corporation, Paterson
 Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey
 Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey
 Interfaith Community of Washington Township Area
 Interreligious Fellowship for the Homeless of Bergen County
 Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey
 Monmouth Neighborhood Housing, Inc.
 Morris County Interfaith Food Pantry, Morristown
 Mount Carmel Guild, Trenton
 National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section
 National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section
 Nativity & St Elizabeth Social Justice Ministry, Wyckoff
 Nativity of Our Lord Church, Morris Township
 New Jersey ACORN
 New Jersey Alliance for the Homeless
 New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition
 New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children
 New Jersey Association on Correction
 New Jersey Catholic Conference
 New Jersey Citizen Action
 New Jersey Council for Exceptional Children
 New Jersey Impeach Groups
 New Jersey Industrial Union Council
 New Jersey League of Women Voters

New Jersey Primary Care Association
New Jersey Tenants Organization
New Labor
Pax Christi, Mahwah
Pax Christi, Cherry Hill
Pax Christi, Bloomfield
RESULTS, Inc. (Bernardsville group)
Sisters of Christian Charity, Metuchen
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, Teaneck
Solutions 4 Houses, Newark
St. Vincent DePaul Social Justice Committee, Stirling NJ
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey
The Apostles' House, Madison
The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton
The WIC Program, Monmouth and Middlesex Counties
The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring - New Jersey Region
United Way of Central Jersey
Urban League of Hudson County
YWCA of Bergen County