

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the New York Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in New York. As New York 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, 268,000 uninsured children in New York 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 York. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for New York's communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in New York's future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 1,162 more children in New York to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 517 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$116 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in New York. Although 774,592 households have trouble putting enough food on the table in New York, 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 28,300 elderly now participating in New York 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 202,400 fewer New York 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,

A Better Balance: The Work & Family Legal Center, New York
AFSCME District Council 1707, New York
American Cancer Society, Deposit
Blauvelt Dominican Sisters
Brain Injury Association, Sodus Point
Cathedral Emergency Services, Syracuse
Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
Child Care Solutions, Syracuse
Child Care, Inc., New York
Citizen Action of New York
Claire Heureuse Community Center, Inc., Jamaica
Columbia Opportunities, Inc., Hudson
Comlinks, Community Action Partnership, Malone
Commission on Economic Opportunity, Troy
Community Action of Greene County, Inc.
Community Action Partnership for Madison County
Community Healthcare Network, New York
Community Maternity Services, West Sand Lake
Coney Island Hospital WIC Program, Brooklyn
Cortland Area Child Care Council
Cortland County Community Action Program
Cypress Hills Child Care Center, Forest Hills
Cypress Hills Child Care Corp. Head Start, Brooklyn
Diocese of Buffalo
District Council 1707 AFSCME, New York
Docs For Tots, Melville
Dominican Sisters, Bronx
Early Childhood Education Quality Council, Rochester
Empire Justice Center
Everywoman Opportunity Center, Inc., Buffalo
Family Development Association of New York State, Guilderland
Family Health Network, Cortland
Family Resource Centers, Rochester
Family Therapy Institute of Suffolk
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, New York
Fiscal Policy Institute, Latham
Good Shepherd Sisters, New York
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
HELP Bronx Morris Tier 11 Shelter, Bronx
International Immigrants Foundation, New York
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island
Jewish Federation of Buffalo
Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties
Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Yonkers
Justice Ministry, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, Rochester
Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York

Lifechoice IPRT, Rochester
Long Island Families Together Inc., Amityville
Love Our Children USA, New York
Maryknoll Sisters, Ossining
Medicaid Matters New York
Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, New York
Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Rome
Monroe County WIC Program
Morris Heights Health Center, Bronx
Mothers4SCHIP, Mamaroneck
NARAL Pro-Choice New York
National Council of Jewish Women, Hewlett
National Council of Jewish Women New York State Public Affairs
Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State, Inc.
New Dimensions in Leadership Inc., Bronx
New York Association on Independent Living
New York Council for Exceptional Children
New York State Child Care Coordinating Council
New York State Community Action Association
New York State Occupational Therapy Association
New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness
NY Universal Living Wage Warriors, Medford
NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
Oneida County Probation Department
Onondaga Community College Child Care Center, Camillus
Opportunities for Otsego, Inc., Oneonta
Orleans Community Action Committee, Albion
Pax Christi, Bronx
Pax Christi, Garden City
Pax Christi, Long Island
Pax Christi, Upstate New York
Peaceful Schools, Syracuse
Presentation Sisters, Rockaway Beach
Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc., Bath
Rekindling Reform, New York
Rochester City School District
Rochester Museum and Science Center Preschool
Sisters of Christian Charity, Bronx
Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, Albany
SCO Family of Services, Dix Hills
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Rochester Regional Community
Sisters of Social Service of Buffalo
Sisters of the Presentation, Montgomery
Sisters of the Presentation, Newburgh

Society of Jesus, New York Province
St. Francis Xavier Mission, New York
St. Lawrence County Community Development Program/ Head Start
Stony Brook Social Justice Center, Centerport
Suffolk County Psychological Association
Temple Beth Zion, Getzville
The Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush, Brooklyn
The Learning Connection, East Northport
The Partnership for the Homeless, New York
United Way of Dutchess County
Ursuline Sisters, New Rochelle
Warren-Hamilton Counties Community Action Agency
Westchester Children's Association, White Plains
Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc., Elmsford
WIC Association of NYS, Canandaigua
WIC Training Center, Delmar
YWCA of Brooklyn
YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County
YWCA of Cortland
YWCA of the Adirondack Foothills
YWCA of the Mohawk Valley, Utica
YWCA of the Mohawk Valley, Herkimer
YWCA/Here We Grow Child Care Center, Cortland