

April 18, 2007

The Honorable \_\_  
United States House of Representatives/Senate  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Representative/Senator:

The undersigned national organizations are writing to urge you to pass a joint budget resolution that allows the most progress possible to address unmet human needs. By supporting the best alternatives for health, nutrition, education and other basic priorities before the conference committee, fewer people in need will remain unserved.

We appreciate the fact that both the House and Senate budgets increased domestic discretionary funding. Nevertheless, both the House and Senate included far less funding than needed to rebuild and move forward from recent past failures to invest adequately in education, housing, nutrition, health care, workforce, and other important domestic programs. Therefore we strongly urge that *no less than* the House's non-defense discretionary figure – about \$7 billion more than the Senate's level – be adopted in the final budget resolution conference agreement. Agreeing to this funding level can make the difference between families receiving housing assistance or languishing on waiting lists; senior citizens getting help with home energy and food costs or risking their health; or children succeeding or failing in school. Please urge the conferees to agree to the higher House non-defense discretionary funding.

We also appreciate that the Senate and House resolutions provide reserve funds to address unmet needs in entitlement programs and include pay-as-you-go rules that require offsets before inequitable tax cuts can be enacted with borrowed money, thus shrinking revenues needed for vital services. We strongly support these two provisions. We also hope you will support the following provisions found in either the House or Senate versions that we believe will help the vast majority of Americans, especially low-income and vulnerable people, while maintaining a responsible approach to tax policy. Please support the adoption of a joint budget resolution that:

- Refrains from using the hypothetical 2012 budget surplus to extend certain tax breaks, including the estate tax (the House budget avoids this practice);
- Establishes a \$50 billion reserve fund for extending the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to cover more uninsured children using the more flexible approach on funding options taken in the House bill;
- Leaves more room to enable the Food Stamp Program to serve needy people more effectively in its reauthorization within the farm bill by including a \$20 billion reserve fund as called for in the House resolution, \$5 billion more than the Senate version;
- Preserves the Sense of the House language in favor of maintaining and building upon efforts to fight hunger;

- Retains the Sense of the House provision seeking restoration of funds to collect Child Support Enforcement funding cut last year, and which will soon result in the loss of billions in support owed to children; and
- Establishes a \$5 billion reserve fund for additional mandatory child care funding (as contained in the Senate budget resolution). These funds are badly needed to reverse the underfunding that would otherwise lead to 450,000 fewer children receiving child care in 2010 than in 2000.

We are glad the House and Senate both reject President Bush's cuts to services. We support language accompanying the budget resolutions pointing to the need to increase funding for education, health care, Katrina survivors, veterans, and research and renewable energy. To achieve these goals, the congressional budget resolution must provide sufficient resources. Please support a final resolution that makes an adequate down payment on meeting pressing needs and assures all pay their fair share.

Sincerely,

ACORN

AFL-CIO

Alliance for Excellent Education

American Academy of HIV Medicine

American Association of University Women

American Family Voices

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

American Federation of Teachers

American Friends Service Committee

Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.

America's Second Harvest -- The Nation's Food Bank Network

The Arc of the United States

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Association of Nutrition Services Agencies (ANSA)

Campaign for America's Future

Center for Community Change

Center for Law and Social Policy

Coalition on Human Needs

Congressional Hunger Center

Easter Seals

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Every Child Matters Education Fund

Families USA

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Institute for the Study of Civic Values

Institute of Social Medicine and Community Health

International Reading Association

Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Legal Momentum  
Lutheran Services in America  
MAZON: a Jewish Response to Hunger  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Migrant Legal Action Program  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National AIDS Housing Coalition  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Council of Churches USA  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Council of Nonprofit Associations  
National Council on Aging  
The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
National Head Start Association  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Priorities Project  
National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
OMB Watch  
People for the American Way  
Pre-K Now  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office  
RESULTS  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sojourners/Call to Renewal  
Union of Reform Judaism  
United Cerebral Palsy  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United for a Fair Economy  
United for Peace and Justice  
The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society  
United States Student Association  
USAction  
Voices for America's Children  
Wider Opportunities for Women  
Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment  
Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)  
YWCA USA