



Statement of Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs, as part of May 8, 2008 Press Conference:

## **Congressman McGovern Joins Human Needs Groups Representing Millions to Call on Congress to Boost State Economies, Help American Families Now**

*Coalition on Human Needs Releases Report Detailing Counter Recession Measures to Address Rising Needs*

The Coalition on Human Needs' members have told us about people out of work, or with lower wages from fewer hours, about families squeezed because of the high cost of necessities – food and energy and health care and housing. Congress can do something about this – and its actions can both ease hardships **now** and help rebuild the economy for the future.

The Emergency Campaign for America's Priorities (ECAP) and the Coalition on Human Needs have assembled a package to promote **broadly shared recovery** from the recession. The package provides:

- extended unemployment insurance;
- a temporary increase in food stamps, food for infants and children (WIC), and emergency food funding to help food pantries with empty shelves and families struggling with milk up 19%, eggs up 33%, and bread up 10%;
- aid to states to prevent Medicaid and other cuts from dragging down the economy and hurting more people;
- funds to prevent losses in Head Start and child support;
- home energy assistance to prevent shut-offs and protect older people from life threatening heat conditions this summer;
- short-term school repair projects and
- summer jobs for youth.

We are encouraged to hear that both the House and Senate plan to include extended unemployment benefits in the supplemental spending bill coming up soon. We are mystified that **anyone** would stand in the way of helping the more than 3 million

unemployed who will exhaust their benefits within the year and face a jobs pool that has been shrinking month after month. The federal unemployment trust fund has well over \$30 billion in it – ***intended just for this purpose.***

Congress needs to do more, though – helping families and communities now will prevent the recession from causing long-term damage. States need more help – a majority now have budget shortfalls and are making cuts in health care, education – even services to protect children from abuse or neglect. All of our package is needed – and should be added as emergency supplemental spending NOW.

ECAP and the Coalition on Human Needs are made up religious groups, service providers, labor, and many other organizations representing millions of people. A letter supporting these provisions was sent to Congress signed by 80 national organizations. We are looking to Congress to do what’s needed to recover from the recession – because helping millions of hard-hit Americans helps all of us.

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