

For Immediate Release: Thursday, 6 October 2005
Contact: Deborah Weinstein, 202-223-2532 x31
Ranit Schmelzer or Jenice Robinson, 202-588-5180
Anna Oman, 202-234-8494

GROUPS CALL ON CONGRESS TO REASSESS ITS PRIORITIES
*More Than 750 State, National and Local Organizations Urge Congress
To Abandon Plans to Cut Services and To Reject New Tax Cuts*

(Washington, D.C.) – As Congress moves forward with plans to slash services for vulnerable Americans and pass new tax cuts, more than 750 groups representing every state sent a letter to lawmakers urging them to re-examine their priorities and focus on sound policies that benefit all Americans.

The national and local organizations asked lawmakers to abandon plans to cut Medicaid, Food Stamps and other assistance to low-income people and to reject additional tax cuts that would reduce revenues needed to meet urgent needs.

“It is unthinkable that Congress would press ahead with cuts to health care, food and other assistance for low-income Americans, including hundreds of thousands of hurricane survivors,” said Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs. “How can they even consider cutting vital services when the need is soaring? Congress must choose the right priorities—protecting and rebuilding lives over squandering billions in tax cuts for the well-connected few.”

In response to Hurricane Katrina, Congress delayed action on bills that would cut at least \$35 billion from Medicaid, Food Stamps, and other services and provide \$70 billion in additional tax breaks, primarily for the wealthiest Americans. However, Congress plans to return to this agenda, and some conservative lawmakers are pressing for even deeper cuts in programs serving low- and moderate-income Americans. Cuts to Medicaid and other services—and more tax cuts—will be considered when Congress returns from its mid-October recess. The letter stressed that action on these distorted priorities should be abandoned, not just delayed. It also urged that the additional services needed for the victims of Katrina not be paid for by cutting vital services for other low-income people.

“Congress’s proposed cuts in spending for vulnerable Americans are a thinly veiled attempt to make room for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans who need it least,” said Nancy Duff Campbell, Co-President of the National Women’s Law Center, a co-chair organization of the Fair Taxes for All Coalition. “It is shameful that lawmakers would invoke Hurricane Katrina to justify an agenda that would force lower-income Americans to make the biggest sacrifices and give more tax breaks to the wealthy.”

To view the letter and a complete list of the organizations that have signed on, visit:
<http://www.chn.org/pdf/reconciliationsignon.pdf>

###

The Coalition on Human Needs is an alliance of more than 100 national religious, service provider, policy, civil rights, labor, and other advocacy organizations who come together to advocate at the federal level for the needs of low-income and vulnerable people.

Fair Taxes for All is a coalition of more than 325 organizations committed to promoting a fair tax system that raises sufficient revenues to create opportunity and invest in the future. Visit: www.fairtaxesforall.org