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Congress Wrong to Protect Wealthiest Americans Instead of Children **Children's Defense Fund Urges New York Members of Congress to Vote for Children** *New York Ranked 7th in CDF Action Council's Legislative Scorecard on 2005 Votes to Protect Children*

The Children's Defense Fund Action Council today called on New York's Members of Congress to support children and defeat the 2006 budget bill when it comes up for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on February 1st. New York already has 20.7 percent, or more than 925,000 children, living in poverty, and 9.7 of its children, or approximately 469,000 youngsters, lack health insurance.

"Congress failed children miserably in 2005. But Members of Congress will have a final chance to do the right thing and vote for children when this morally obscene budget bill is brought before them again for a vote on February 1st. Last year, Congress chose to protect the wealthiest among us at the expense of the most vulnerable among us: our children," said Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Action Council President Marian Wright Edelman.

The 2006 budget, approved by half of the U.S. Senate and a majority of the House of Representatives last month, cut billions of dollars in health care costs for 25 million children through Medicaid, and cut billions more from child support and child care programs, foster care and student loans. While making massive cuts to critical programs affecting working families, Congress also approved nearly \$60 billion in tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires.

"The United States of America does not have a money problem; we have a profound values and leadership problem," added Edelman. "Every member of Congress has a moral obligation to cast votes that improve — not hurt — the lives of children. This budget vote will show us how seriously our political leaders take this responsibility."

The CDF Action Council today released its *2005 Children's Defense Fund Action CouncilSM Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard*. It includes annual rankings of Members of Congress according to how often they voted to protect children during the 2005 legislative session. New York's congressional delegation ranked 7th with a score of 71 percent.

The 2005 Children's Defense Fund Action CouncilSM Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard tallied nine Senate votes and nine House votes that directly impacted the lives of children. The complete report provides charts showing how all Members of Congress and state delegations voted on children's issues. The report is available online at <http://www.cdfactioncouncil.org/scorecard2005.pdf>.

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The CDF Action Council engages in lobbying and grassroots mobilization in support of federal and state legislation to meet the needs of children. Its Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.