



CHILD DEFENDER - NEW YORK

A Call to Action from the Children's Defense Fund - New York
April 21, 2006

LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

NYC Misses Opportunity to Simplify Food Stamp Program

New York City this week in a yes-to-no flip flop chose not to pursue a federal waiver request that would have allowed able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) to receive food stamps regardless of whether they are working. This policy decision is unfortunate as well as inconsistent with the simplification measures New York City has already taken to increase access and participation in the food stamp program.

Current policy restricts receipt of food stamps by ABAWDs to three out of every 36 months if they are not working or willing to participate in the city work program. If the city had requested the waiver, an estimated 13,900 more individuals would have been able to access food stamps. Clearly, the ABAWD waiver would have helped simplify and increase access to food stamps.

Implementing the ABAWD waiver would have provided administrative relief to the Human Resources Administration by removing onerous tracking and reporting requirements. Resources which then could be used to focus on enrolling eligible children and families reducing further the 40% of eligible New Yorkers not participating in the food stamp program, and possibly providing support to some of the 600,000 city children still living in poverty.

The waiver would have allowed unemployed persons to continue to use food stamps to buy food while making an earnest effort to look for work or participate in the city's work programs.

The waiver would have also benefited New York City as a whole. For every five food stamp dollars spent in NYC, nine dollars are generated in related economic activity as those dollars travel through the food economy.

As families continue to balance the rising costs of rent, fuel and food, they should have access to the Food Stamp Program. The Administration should dedicate scarce resources to simplifying the program rather than maintaining onerous tracking and reporting requirements.

Students March to Capitol to End Child Poverty in New York

By KELLY SMITH, Mon, Mar 27, 2006
LEGISLATIVE GAZETTE (EXCERPTED)

Dr. Carson Carr Jr. knows child poverty. Growing up, he was one of seven children raised by a single mother who worked as a maid. They were on public assistance and sometimes did not know where their next meal would come from. Now, Carr is the associate vice president for academic affairs at the University at Albany.

Carr saw first-hand the effects of child poverty - the same issue that moved over one hundred students from the College of St. Rose and other area schools to march from the St. Rose campus to the East Steps of the Capitol to rally last Wednesday.

"If you don't speak on behalf of the children, who will?" Sister Maureen Joyce, chief executive officer of the Catholic Charities Diocese of Albany, asked the crowd. Joyce said New York has the widest income gap of any state and has "failed" its children. She also had a message for state legislators: "Do not balance the New York state budget on the backs of poor children."

The students were advocating for an increase in pay for child care workers to attract better candidates and increased subsidies to make child care more affordable for parents. They were also supporting the New York Safe Neighborhood Investment Act of 2005, a bill that would, among other things, address punishment for gang activity and give tax credits to local businesses that invest in or contribute to community service programs.

Hector Soto, director of policy and advocacy for the Children's Defense Fund-NY, said the poorest children of the state are being ignored. He said in Albany County, for example, the child poverty rate is 13 percent. But Albany County contains five zip codes; in 12207, he said, the poverty rate is over 68 percent. "It's hidden by these buildings, it's hidden by people in suits, it's hidden and kept under wraps," he said.

The students carried postcards to distribute to their legislators, urging them not to forget about the poor children of the state this budget season.

Hooray for PreK!

The New York State budget for 2006-07 includes \$50 million in additional funding for expansion of New York's Universal Prekindergarten program. New York City is slated to receive \$25 million. This is the first new money for PreK in five years! Visit www.winningbeginningny.org to send a letter of thanks to the Governor and the Legislature for giving our youngest learners a jumpstart on school success.

Cover the Uninsured Week

Cover the Uninsured Week 2006 is May 1-7. The Children's Defense Fund joins other organizations and individuals across the country to tell our leaders that health care coverage for Americans must be a priority. There are many ways you can get involved leading up to and during the *Week!*

CALL TO ACTION

Visit www.CoverTheUninsured.org to tell Congress that health coverage must be its top priority and to spread the word by sending a *Cover the Uninsured Week* e-mail to your friends.

Free materials are available for download and order at www.CoverTheUninsured.org/materials to help you plan events, promote the issue of the uninsured and help get America covered. Available materials include stickers, banners, handouts and campus, interfaith and health and enrollment fair planning guides.

You can also visit www.CoverTheUninsured.org/stateguides for a New York state resource guide designed to help people living without health insurance find assistance.

SAVE THE DATE

March for Peace, Justice and Democracy

When: Saturday, April 29, 2006

Where: New York City (more information TBA)

What: Join with progressives from civil rights organizations, the peace movement, environmental groups, labor and religious communities for a march sponsored by the National Organization for Women. Additional information will be posted as it's available at www.now.org/nyc2006.

Youth Hearing and Speak Out: *Invest in Us!*

When: Tuesday, May 9th

Where: New York City Hall

What: The New York City budget will be passed in June. Come tell Council Members what programs are important to you and your community. Join the Youth in the Movement to Leave No Child Behind and New York City and Council Member Gale A. Brewer in this important Youth Hearing.

Come to the YIM Leadership Council Meeting on May 5th to help plan the Youth Hearing and Speak Out. For more information on either date, please call Sandy Trujillo at (212) 697-2323 ext. 118.

SAVE THE DATE

Juvenile Justice Coalition Meeting

When: May 17th

Where: CASES, 346 Broadway, 6th floor

What: Join a panel discussion at the Juvenile Justice Coalition meeting on May 17th at 3pm. The members of the panel include Neil Hernandez, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Juvenile Justice; Commissioner Martin Horn, NYC Department of Probation; Deputy Commissioner Ron Richter, NYC Administration for Children's Services; and Michelle Sviridoff, Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator. For more information or to RSVP e-mail mfaruqee@correctionalassociation.org.

Nationwide Immigrant Rights Mobilization to D.C. Register Now!

April 24th will be the first day that Congress is back in session; that date also marks the 10th anniversary of the 1996 immigration laws. On that day, join a gathering of families affected by deportations in meetings with Congress offices and Embassies of countries receiving deportees as well as a vigil in front of the Capitol. This day is to remember our loved ones - the 1.4 million people deported in the last 10 years - and to revive efforts to repeal the 1996 mandatory deportation and detention laws. For more information or to register, call Families for Freedom at (718) 858-9658 ext. 204 or visit www.familiesforfreedom.org.

Opportunity: Become a Certified Peer Educator

The Young Women's Choices Program, a project of the Center for Community Alternatives, is seeking young women between the ages of 13 and 17 to apply for the HIV/AIDS Peer Education Training. Topics covered in the training include sexual health, risk reduction, decision making, relationships, peer counseling, presentation skills, and other social and health issues relevant to young women in New York City. Certified Peer Educators will then have the opportunity to be hired to teach their peers about these issues. Training begins on May 3rd and continues Wednesday and Thursday evenings 4:00-6:30 p.m. for eight weeks. For more information, contact Dawn Ravine at (718) 858-9658 ext. 217 or dravine@communityalternatives.org

Opportunity: Call for Submissions

Young Women's Anthology Call for Submissions

Doing it in Strange Places . . . and Making Change: Young Women Fighting for Social Justice is looking for writing by young women about creative ways they've used their passions as outlets for social justice activism. This anthology will make activism more accessible and inspire others to use the resources they have to contribute to social justice. Write about strategies that have worked and that haven't worked, because all lessons are valuable. Writers of all experience levels are encouraged to submit work. All submissions must be received by May 1, 2006. For more information, contact Mandy Van Deven at mandy_vandeven@yahoo.com.