



*Getting to the
Root of the
Problem*

Hunger Action Network OF NEW YORK STATE

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Hunger Alert – August 2008

1. Call Governor Paterson: 518 474-8390: Urge More Money for HEAP, Raise the Welfare Grant, and Support the Millionaires Tax
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1. Call Governor Paterson: 518 474-8390: Urge More Money for HEAP, Raise the Welfare Grant, and Support the Millionaires Tax

New York faces a major budget crisis, with a projected deficit next year of \$5 billion. Yet the tax cuts given to the rich during the Pataki years costs the state \$16 billion annually. Rather than cutting spending on services as Governor Paterson has proposed – a very bad idea during a recession – a fairer solution would be to take back some of the tax giveaways to the wealthy. We have also been supporting a proposal by the Assembly to impose a tax on the windfall profits on the oil companies to raise \$550 million in state funds to supplement the federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) to help low and middle income families with their heating bills this winter.

Please call Gov. Paterson at (518) 474-8390 and leave the following message: We want the Governor to solve the state deficit by making the rich pay their fair share of taxes and spend more money to raise the welfare grant and expand the Home Energy Assistance Program.

2. Hunger Action to Hold General Interest Meetings: NYC and Westchester, Aug. 13; Buffalo and Rochester, Aug. 22nd; Albany Sept. 3

Hunger Action Network is holding a series of meetings around the state to discuss the 2009-10 state budget, raising the welfare grant, the Economic Security Campaign, our Welfare to Work Survey, and universal health care. We will discuss the campaign to resolve the state budget deficit by making the wealthy pay a fairer share of the tax burden rather than cutting state spending on essential programs. We also want to make a big push this year to get more of our low-income supporters mobilized in our advocacy efforts.

For NYC: Wednesday, August 13th at 4pm at City Harvest 4th floor of 575 8th Avenue, between 38th and 39th

Street. Pizza and soda will be provided. **Westchester:** August 13th at 11am at the Yonkers Riverfront library in Room 2B. **Rochester** August 22, 1:30 PM, Friday Action for A Better Community, 550 E. Main St. **Buffalo;** Friday August 22, 9:30 AM, site TBA; **Albany:** Wed. Sept. 3, noon, Emmanuel Baptist Church, 275 State St.

3. Hunger Action Network Annual membership meeting NYC Mon Sept. 22

Hunger Action's annual membership conference will be in Harlem on Monday Sept. 22, either at St. Mary's Episcopal Church or Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. A key focus will be raising hunger and poverty in the 2008 elections, especially in light of the growing food and energy crisis. We have invited Gov. Paterson to attend but that seems unlikely. We are also inviting Assemblymember Keith Wright, Chair of the Assembly Social Services Committee; Senator Velmanette Montgomery; and Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith. We will also have workshops on universal health care (Health Care Now, Rekindling Reform); economic justice (Ron Deutsch, NYers for Fiscal Fairness; green jobs by Center for Working Families; raising the welfare grant); and how to mobilize low-income members.

4. Hunger and Poverty and the 2008 Elections – Forums, Poverty to Prosperity Pledge

Hunger Action is working with the Empire State Economic Security Campaign (ES2) to organize a series of Town Hall meetings around our economic justice agenda with state legislative candidates. Targets include Buffalo, Rochester, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Albany. Please let us know if you are interested in organizing a forum in your community.

We will also be sending out a 7 point Poverty to Prosperity Pledge for candidates to sign. Issues include: welfare grant; tax reform; green jobs; higher minimum wage; Home Energy Assistance program; affordable housing; fair taxes. We need people to meet with their state legislators and ask them to sign the pledge. Contact Mark Dunlea, dunleamark@aol.com, 518 434-7371 xt 1# if you would like to help.

5. Faith and Hunger Network sign on letter re: welfare grant and universal health care

The Faith and Hunger Network has developed a sign on letter for faith groups and leaders to send to Governor Paterson. The deadline is Sept. 8. The first few paragraphs are below. Contact dunleamark@aol.com if you would like to see a copy of the entire letter. (Will be on our website shortly) The Faith Community is also organizing events and outreach materials for faith groups during the week of October 13 to 17 (which includes World Food Day).

As representatives of the faith community in New York State, we urge you to provide moral leadership in ending the problems of hunger, homelessness and poverty in our communities. Specifically, we urge you to propose restoring the value of welfare benefits to at least its 1990 level and to propose quality affordable health care for all.

We speak with urgency and embrace the biblical mandates to feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless, and clothe the naked. Poverty diminishes hope and crushes the human spirit. The Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions speak for the dignity of people in poverty in God's sight, and that it is society's responsibility to address and alleviate such inequities. Helping people in need is a matter of fundamental principle, responsibility, righteousness and justice, not an act of charity.

6. Welfare to Work Surveys – Volunteers Needed

In September and October we will be surveying current and former welfare participants about their experiences with the welfare to work programs run by HRA and local Department of Social Services. Are they getting the

help they need to become more employable? How well are assessments done? What programs work best? Please contact us if you can help survey guests at your program or at local welfare offices.

7. Tues Aug. 12th – Congressional candidate forum in Albany on universal health care

Hunger Action is co-sponsoring with the Capital District Alliance for Universal Healthcare, Inc.(CDAUH) a 21st Congressional District Candidate Healthcare Forum on Tuesday, August 12, from 7-9 p.m. at Emerson Community Hall, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, 405 Washington Avenue (between Lake and Robin) in Albany. The seat is being vacated by Cong. Mike McNulty, a co-sponsor of HR 676

The candidates who have agreed to participate are: Tracey Brooks, Darius Shahinfar, Phil Steck, Paul Tonko and Steven Vasquez, and invited, Jim Buhrmaster and Joseph Sullivan. Each candidate will focus exclusively on healthcare.

8. Single Payer NY – Albany Medical College, Sat Sept. 13 from 1 to 4 - statewide

On Saturday, September 13, 2008, single payer advocates from across New York will meet in Albany to form a new statewide organization. Our aim: to build an unbeatable movement for single payer public system that would fully fund comprehensive health care, including prescription drugs, for all. Private insurance has no legitimate role to play in the care of the sick, and we believe it must be replaced by a public program of health financing. Under a single-payer healthcare system, we'll spend our healthcare dollars on care, not on bureaucratic waste, profit-making, and personal gain.

The meeting will take place at Albany Medical College (New Scotland Ave., near Holland) from 1 to 4 PM. In the morning from 10 to 12 there will be an educational event on single payer featuring Donna Smith from the Michael Moore movie, SICKO. Contact our Albany office for more info. We are also looking for groups and individuals to be the single payer contact in their county.

9. Save the Date: Monday October 27 – North East Regional Anti-Hunger Conference

NY participates with 7 other states in the NorthEast Regional Anti-Hunger Network. We are having our first regional anti-hunger conference on Oct. 27th from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at the Hoagland-Pincus Conference Center, Shrewsbury, MA. More details can be found at <http://nerahn.com/>

10. Hunger Action Network Needs Volunteers and Interns

Hunger Action needs help in our NYC and Albany offices. Tasks run from the normal office needs (database, computer technology, phone calls, and mailings) to direct service (helping people fill out food stamp applications) to research and advocacy efforts (organizing meetings, forums, demonstrations, meetings with legislators) to media (producing videos, brochures, newsletters). We are always looking for college students to do internships for credit.

11. Save the Date. Dine to Donate

During National Hunger and Homeless Week (Nov. 10 – 13th), various Applebee locations in the tri-state area will donate 10% of their profits to the Hunger Action Network. All participants have to do is bring a flyer with them and enjoy their meal.