



Getting to the Root of the Problem GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the Hunger Action Network of New York State

August 2005

Faces of Hunger Action Network

Berenice Katzen Cohen is one of the most dedicated and witty members Hunger Action has been lucky enough to have. A retired New York City school teacher, Berenice started volunteering with Hunger Action four years ago. She initially helped with mailings and database updates, and has expanded her role to include membership recruitment, events coordination, fundraising, and much more.



Berenice lives in Yonkers and spends most of her time with Hunger Action at the New York City office. She was a key coordinator of Feast for Famine, Hunger Action's spring fundraiser. She recruited restaurants, solicited items for the silent auction, and conducted outreach for the event.

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Hunger Action Network will hold its statewide Annual Membership Meeting on Mon. September 26th at Lake Avenue Baptist Church in Rochester. We invite you to attend to renew your dedication as a Hunger Action supporter and member. It's also a perfect opportunity for new people to learn about Hunger Ac-

tion and become involved in our projects (see p. 10).

The theme of this year's event is One New York: Building Economic Prosperity for All.

Fewer New Yorkers than ever before are able to achieve the American Dream. Climbing the economic ladder has become almost impossible with skyrocketing costs of housing, health insurance and a college education coupled with the rapid decline in secure, decent paying jobs. New York can do better. It is time

to rebuild a New York where everyone can achieve economic prosperity.

This year's keynote speaker will be Andrea Batista Schlesinger, Executive Director of the Drum Major Institute, a progressive policy institute founded during the civil rights movement working for social and economic fairness.

Her address will focus on the shared concerns of low-income and middle class New Yorkers and the possibilities for working together to create policy changes.

The Annual Membership Meeting is an opportunity to learn, share, and strategize around the issues facing low-income New Yorkers. Specific workshops include: Job Creation and Corporate accountability, Health Care for All, Food Justice, and A Real Safety Net: Strategies for Raising the Standard of Living on Welfare.

The day will also feature a panel presentation entitled A Budget for All New Yorkers: Making Families a Priority in the State Budget Without Breaking the Bank.

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Notes from the Executive Director..

Please aid Hunger Action in our work to end hunger in New York State.

At the federal level, tax cuts for the very wealthy of over \$100 billion plus the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on the war in Iraq have created huge budget deficits. To pay for this, the President plans to cut essential anti-hunger and human service programs. President Bush is also proposing to eliminate funding for the Community Food Nutrition Program, Hunger Action's only source of government funding for our work. Hunger Action worked to collect over 100 letters from New Yorkers to our federal representatives opposing this lopsided and dangerous budget proposal.

At the state level, while much of the health care debate in Albany has focused on the issue of capping local government contributions to Medicaid, the larger health care issues — paying way too much money for an inferior health care system that is ranked only 37th in the world — have largely gone ignored. Hunger Action pushed for the establishment of a Legislative Commission on Health Care to do a cost benefit analysis of all the ways that New York could provide health care for all New Yorkers.

Earlier this year, Hunger Action and other nonprofits were successful in stopping most of the worst budget proposals by Governor Pataki, avoiding billions in proposed cuts in health care programs. But the budget adopted largely continued the status quo, meaning that many of the human service cuts enacted as the "barebones budget" following September 11th are continued. Once again critical investments in the future of our state — education, nutrition, job creation, human service programs — were not made.

We have also been urging the closure of state corporate tax loopholes that enable large, multi-state corporations to evade paying their fair share of state taxes. These loopholes not only hurt all other taxpayers but give these companies an unfair business advantage over small, local businesses. For more information, see www.abetterchoicefornyc.org.

The creation of living wage jobs remains a top priority for Hunger Action. We are urging state officials to include job hiring targets for low-income and welfare participants as part of the upcoming Transportation Bond Act.

The struggle to end hunger in our state is not an easy one. Funding for nonprofits from government and private foundations has plummeted in recent years. Hunger Action has been forced to layoff a number of staff while the problem of hunger continues to grow. Summer is particularly a challenging time for us to make our payroll and pay our bills.

We appreciate any support you can provide to support our work.

In Unity,

Bich Ha Pham



Grassroots is published four times a year by the Hunger Action Network of New York State.

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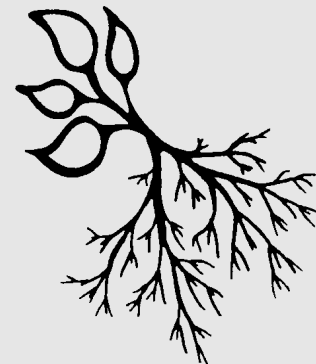
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Bloomberg Vetoes Food Stamp Bills in NYC

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCA), an umbrella group for the city's more than 1,200 soup kitchens and food pantries, sharply criticized Mayor Michael Bloomberg for vetoing three bills passed by the City Council, that would ease access to federally-funded food stamp benefits for working families and other hard-to-reach populations.

NYCCA challenged the accuracy of the Mayor's claim that the bills violate state and federal law, providing evidence that, not only are the provisions legal, they formalize procedures already carried out and accelerate efforts already planned by the City.

"The Mayor's decision to veto these bills is both hard-hearted and counter-productive," said NYCCA Executive Director Joel Berg. "This will fuel further growth in the City's already widening hunger crisis, and will also deprive the City of much-needed federal funding. It is a lose-lose decision. We urge the City Council to rapidly override the vetoes."

The bills (Int. No. 593, Int. No. 594, and Int. No. 615) would require the City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) to: distribute food stamps applications at soup kitchens and food pantries; enable people to apply for food stamps by fax and on-line; waive face-to-face interviews for food stamp applicants who are working, disabled, or face other hardships; and provide an application receipt to each applicant.

Continued Berg, "These steps to improve access to food stamps are benefits both legal and sensible. Unfortunately,

the Mayor's vetoes continue a disturbing pattern. Since becoming Mayor, he has consistently refused to visit a soup kitchen or food pantry or meet with anti-hunger advocates. He has repeatedly declined a federal waiver to enable more unemployed people to obtain food stamps. Not only that, he has even sought to cut funding for pantries and kitchens. As a result of these actions, food pantries and soup kitchens have been forced to turn away more hungry New Yorkers than at any point in modern history. The Mayor must be held accountable for this record."

Despite some recent increases in participation in the Food Stamp Program in New York City, due mostly to the weak economy, overall participation is still 25% lower than 10 years ago, with 360,688 fewer people receiving benefits today than in 1995. There are currently more than 600,000 low-income New York City residents eligible for, but not receiving benefits, costing the city's economy up to \$1 billion in lost federal funding and \$1.8 billion in lost economic activity per year.

The **city budget agreement** between the City Council and Mayor Bloomberg provides \$2 million more for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) – the City's main source of funding for food pantries and soup kitchens – than the budget originally proposed by Mayor Bloomberg.

Not only did the City Council oppose the Mayor's plan to cut \$670,000 from EFAP, they added an additional \$1.3 million in funding, bringing the total money added to \$2 million.

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End Hunger Now !

Legislature Adjourns without Acting on Universal Health Care Commission

The New York Universal Health Care Options Campaign, representing over 250 diverse organizations from across the state, expressed their disappointment that Senate leaders failed to come to agreement on the creation of a Legislative Commission on Health Care Coverage before adjourning for the year. The Campaign has requested a meeting with Senate Health Care Committee Chair Kemp Hannon to hear what additional questions Hannon needs the Commission to address to gain his support.

“We are grateful for all of the people we have met over these past months who care as we do - about health care for ALL residents of NYS. We are disappointed in our elected representatives who did NOT support the proposal for a health commission that would be a first step to a change in our current system. We will continue to work with and for those who share our values” said Sr. Beth LaValle of the Rochester Interfaith Health Care Coalition.

During the last few weeks of the session, Assemblymember Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Health Committee, rewrote the legislation (A6575) to address several concerns expressed by Senator Hannon. However, Senator Hannon failed to come to final agreement over the wording.

“Failure of our legislature to create a Commission on Health Coverage Reform is saddening. It indicates what a low priority the leadership places on seeking solutions to the health care insecurity that plagues New Yorkers,” said Sid Socolar of Rekindling Reform

The proposed Commission is modeled after similar successful efforts in Cali-

ornia and Maine. Other states such as Illinois and Maryland have also initiated such efforts. Rather than promote a particular policy solution at the outset, the Commission would initiate a statewide process to engage both citizens and stakeholders in developing options for the state to move toward health care for all and overcome problems of the current system.

A legislative commission would examine and make recommendations concerning mechanisms for providing comprehensive, affordable, quality health coverage to all New Yorkers while simultaneously controlling costs and ensuring freedom of choice for consumers. It would be charged with exploring both publicly-financed approaches (e.g., single payer, employer mandates) as well as how to expand on private sector ones (e.g., HMOs, tax credits, health savings accounts).

“New York spends far too much money already for an inferior health care system. What we need is much better health care for the money we are already spending. And controlling costs means dealing with the financial and health problems of having more than 3 million NYers without health care insurance today – and that figure rises to nearly six million over a year period. Health care costs are far too large a portion of the state’s budget for legislators to keep applying a few band-aids to a system that is hemorrhaging so badly,” added Mark Dunlea, Associate Director of Hunger Action.

Many of the campaign members this summer and fall will continue to pursue the goal of a universal comprehensive national healthcare system for all through

Citizen/Congressional Hearings in conjunction with Healthcare-NOW in Albany, Rochester, Ithaca, Westchester, Nassau County, Freeport, Jamestown, and Buffalo.

Many policymakers acknowledge that resolving the problem of lack of insurance is critical to the success of restructuring New York’s health care system. Many of the hospitals with the biggest financial problems are those serving the poorest communities with the highest number of uninsured patients. The Legislature did agree to create a commission to close down hospitals in the state while imposing caps on local contributions to the Medicaid programs. Advocates fear that without comprehensive reforms to improve services and cut costs, the skyrocketing costs of providing long term care to seniors and the disabled will merely result in the state legislature slashing services to the politically vulnerable.

Every year, 18,000 Americans die prematurely because they don’t have health insurance, according to a comprehensive report by the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine. Since they receive inadequate health care and their major illnesses are diagnosed too late, the uninsured become sicker and die sooner. For instance, uninsured women with breast cancer have a 30 to 50 percent higher risk of dying than women with health insurance. The current system for providing medical care to the uninsured drives up healthcare costs for everyone else. When the uninsured do receive care, it is often at hospital emergency rooms and urgent care clinics that are costly and inefficient places to provide primary care. **(You can download our health care packet on our website)**

Food Stamps Face Congressional Fight

Members of three minority caucuses in the House—Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific American—warned the House Agriculture Committee against cutting the Food Stamp Program in the FY 2006 Budget Reconciliation process. Representative Joe Baca (D-CA) said, “For the members of these caucuses, funding for food stamps and nutrition programs is a key priority. We care about agriculture, but not at the expense of providing assistance to feed hungry children.”

September 16th is the deadline for the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to pass legislation to cut five-year spending for programs under their jurisdiction by \$3 billion. It is urgent that anti-hunger allies communicate with Members of Congress now about protecting the Food Stamp Program during the fall budget reconciliation process.

Contact All Members of Congress, but especially Senate and House Leaders and Members of the Senate and House Agriculture Commit-

tees. For contact information for Members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees and their staff, go to http://www.frac.org/Legislative/Congress_Contacts.html.

Protect the Food Stamp Program’s Funding and Structure: Keep any budget cuts as close to zero as possible; reject optional block grants and extraordinary waiver authority. Ask Members of Congress to convey that message to Senate and House Leaders and Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees

Action Needed on FY 2006 Appropriations: Urge support for the Senate committee versions of both Agriculture Appropriations and Labor-HHS-Education Bills for FY 2006; contact Senators and Member of Congress (especially those on the Agriculture or Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittees whose contacts are posted at http://www.frac.org/Legislative/Congress_Contacts.html).

FLEXIBLE FUND FOR FAMILY SERVICES

Governor Pataki proposed in his 2005-06 Executive Budget to lump all TANF funded supportive services into a \$1 billion block grant to counties called the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS). In the end, the Legislature and Governor agreed to block grant \$600 million for FFFS. The Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) in your county is deciding on how the \$600 million block grant will be used. We encourage you to get more information from your LDSS

office as to how they plan to allocate the funds and their timeline for doing so.

For a chart created by SENSES breaking down the TANF funded support services that were block granted into FFFS, go to: http://www.hungeractionnys.org/leg_other.htm. For a Q & A on FFFS prepared by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, go to: http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/FFFS_FAQ.asp

Faces...from page 1

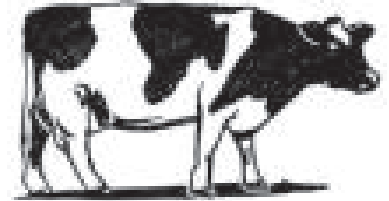
In addition to helping with events, Berenice is a constant source of energy and inspiration for our work. She encourages staff to ask critical questions and approach our work with a fresh perspective. Berenice recently hosted Hunger Action’s annual staff retreat at her lake house near Albany for the second year in a row. During the retreat, staff described Berenice as dedicated, generous, spunky, motivational, spirited, and honest.

Berenice has been equally enthusiastic about her appreciation for Hunger Action. She noted, “I have always admired the hard work and dedication of the staff and value the fact that Hunger Action works to end the root causes of hunger.”

Last May, Berenice helped organize an Empty Bowls fundraising event in Westchester to fight hunger. Local residents were invited to share a simple meal of bread and soup and hear presentations on hunger. The price of admission was the purchase of a handmade bowl by local artists, which started at \$5. Proceeds from the sale of bowls benefited Hunger Action and the Lord’s Pantry, a Westchester County-wide meals-on-wheels service to families with AIDS. Berenice was instrumental in proposing the event idea, planning the event, and traveling throughout the county to solicit bowl donations. Special thanks also goes out to the cosponsors, Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism (WCHJ) and The Community Unitarian Church at White Plains.

Berenice is active with many other activities including acting as the Social Action Committee Chair at WCHJ and volunteering at a shelter in Westchester. We also know her artistic side, having seen some of her pottery and watercolor works.

Hunger Action Network Green Space



Urban Delights' Youth Driven Projects

Urban Delights provides youth from high-risk environments with an educational experience that includes entrepreneurship, youth development and leadership opportunities. The project is designed to contribute to inner-city neighborhoods by enhancing connections to local food systems and promoting urban agriculture, local economic development and the active participation of youth in their communities.

The first aim of the project is to provide a high quality, results-oriented youth development program that broadens participants' perspectives and competencies to be better equipped to continue with their education, successfully enter the workforce and/or create their own jobs. Secondly, the project seeks to enhance community economic development by contributing to the revitalization of inner-city areas by inspiring and supporting youth to create positive change in their communities. The project also addresses the need for healthy food and a viable, local food system by extending inner-city residents' access to fresh produce.

Urban Delights is a collaborative initiative of local non-profit community organizations, as well as community minded funders, and urban youth. Jubilee Homes of Syracuse, Inc. is the program's lead agency. Youth also play an active role in the development of projects. This includes providing critical input to the future directions for Urban Delights, designing promotional materials, advocating for the project at City Council



committee meetings, and co-writing funding proposals. Likewise, the project has attracted community volunteers and the financial support of a number of foundations, banks, and local businesses.

Youth Farmstand Project: The farmstand project combines personal development, business skills and first hand experience growing and selling fresh produce. The project gives 14-17 year olds from the inner city a chance to learn what it takes to run a small business while promoting good citizenship and positive environmental practices. In the process, youth gain job-readiness education and are linked with personal support services. During the summer months, participants operate farm stands at 8-10 sites throughout the inner city.

They provide locally-grown produce in urban neighborhoods where fresh fruits and vegetables are often difficult to find. Project youth also get their hands in soil, cultivating and harvesting herbs and vegetables at their own community garden sites and at organic farms in the country.

Senior Delivery Project: Throughout 2004, Urban Delights also piloted a senior center fresh fruit and vegetable delivery service to provide low-income seniors with improved access to nutritious and affordable produce.

For more information, contact Urban Delights at 315-428-0070, E-mail: lrealy@jubilee-homes.org, or go to www.jubilee-homes.org.

Food Justice in NYC

Over 130 community food advocates, anti-hunger advocates, and concerned citizens attended a community conference on Food Justice on Tuesday, June 28, 2005 in NYC.

Meeting attendees gathered to address critical food issues such as obesity, the low access to quality supermarkets in many inner city neighborhoods, and the increased demand at Emergency Food Programs.

Attendees focused on building a local food system that ends hunger and poverty while supporting locally grown, healthy food. Attendees also learned about existing Food Justice projects and resources and participated in break-out sessions to strategize on how to foster community-based and government solutions to these issues.

Many great questions and ideas were raised at the meeting surrounding access to wholesome food, the connection between race and access to food, further involving policy makers and community members in these issues, conducting focus groups on food issues, and developing next steps.

Attendees brainstormed about diverse solutions to creating a just food system such as “redirecting government funding from big agriculture to small farmers” to “receiving help for procuring land for community gardens” among many others.

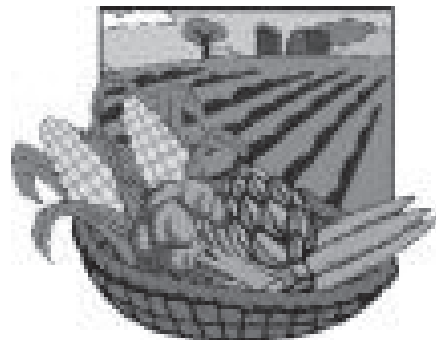
The meeting also included an analysis on the New York City food system, conducted by the NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. The analysis highlighted the amount of food we eat, how much we spend on food, the food we import, the money we export to import food, and the potential benefits of a stronger local food system.

This included the market gap, or the difference between what NYC residents spend on food and what regional producers generate from sales in NYC. The difference is huge and represents an important economic growth opportunity for NY farmers, food producers, packers, packagers, processors, distributors and retailers.

If NY and NJ farmers captured just 10% of the NYC market for fresh food (\$1.8 billion), and NY and NJ food manufacturers also captured just 10% of the NYC market for packaged and processed food (another \$1.8 billion) - that money could fuel local and regional economic development by generating \$6.8 billion in new income and 7,212 jobs through regional multiplier effects.

For a summary of feedback on food security issues from attendees and the market gap analysis, go to the Community Food section of Hunger Action’s website.

The community conference was cosponsored by: Chelsea CSA, Feed the Solution, Food Bank for NYC, FoodChange, Hunger Action Network of NYS, Just Food, NYC Coalition Against Hunger, NYC Nutrition Education Network, NY Farms!, NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, SENSES, & World Hunger Year.



Thanksgiving Action vs. Hunger Mon. Nov. 21

We invite you to participate in the Thanksgiving Action Against Hunger on Monday, November 21, 2005. We especially need people to organize local press conference to help us release a statewide study on the use of emergency food programs.

Thanksgiving is the one time of the year when communities join together to make sure that no one goes hungry. But hunger is a 365 day a year problem. Justice, not holiday charity, is the solution to hunger.

Currently, over 900,000 New Yorkers must rely on food programs each week and an increasing number of families cannot make ends meet. For this year’s Thanksgiving Action Against Hunger, hundreds of New Yorkers will be calling for solutions that eliminate the root causes of hunger, namely poverty.

To emphasize the urgency of this devastating problem in our state, Hunger Action will be releasing a report that reflects hunger trends over the past year as part of the event. Please join us. Your support is needed.

To get involved, please fill out the form below and return it to Hunger Action by mail or fax or contact 212-741-8192, ext. 3# or us at 518-434-7371, ext. 2#.

Organization: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Fax _____
email _____

Assembly Holds Food Policy Hearing

This spring, more than thirty organizations testified at a joint Assembly hearing on food policy that was convened by the Assembly Task Force of Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, and the Committees on Social Services and Agriculture.

Hunger Action has always understood that ending hunger is an integral part of the larger goal of creating a sustainable food system. New York State farmers often struggle to find markets for their fresh fruits and vegetables, while many low income consumers lack reliable access to these healthy foods.

What is Community Food Security?

Food security means that food is available at all times; that all persons have means of access to it; that it is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety; and that it is acceptable within the given culture. Only when all these conditions are in place can a population be considered food secure.

Since locally produced and distributed food reduces dependence on long-distance food sources, a community food system increases community self-sufficiency. A community food system has the potential to promote ecologically friendly food cultivation methods. Such a system can also have a significant impact on economic development because it creates locally based employment and provides opportunities for people to raise themselves out of poverty.

Changes in our national agriculture system have contributed to a decline in the growing of fruits and vegetables in New York. Our current food system is based largely on cheap fuel costs, public investment in transportation, subsidies for irrigation, industrial livestock facilities, row crop production and the externalization of many environmental costs.

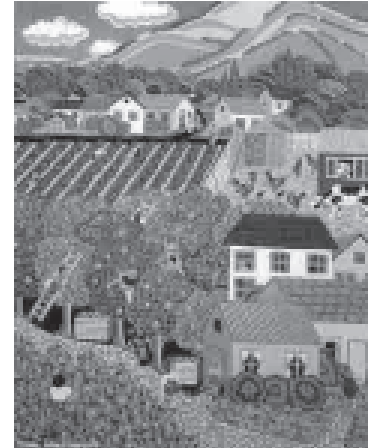
Corporate supermarket chains want guaranteed year round supplies of produce and prefer to deal with only a few wholesalers, so they import produce items even when regional production could satisfy demand.

Re-Establish a NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy

A New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy should be re-established, pulling together the various state agencies that work on health, hunger, food and agriculture issues. The council also needs the broad participation of farmers, consumers, anti-hunger advocates, food bank managers, labor representatives, members of the faith community, food processors, food wholesalers and distributors, food retailers and grocers, chefs and restaurant owners, officials from farm organizations and community gardeners.

In establishing the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy in the late 1980s, Governor Mario Cuomo stated “the basic goal of a food and nutrition policy is not only to provide adequate nutrition in an accessible and affordable manner, but also strive to achieve efficient growth in agricultural production, job generation, food security and expanded markets for goods.”

The Commission had four goals: encourage diets that promote good health; alleviate and ultimately prevent hunger in every household by assuring that all citizens have access to food through adequate purchasing power; support an adequate food producing system in NYS; and promote the development and economic viability of the state’s food processing, marketing and distribution industries.



The council was directed to develop a Five Year Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy. Successful initiatives included: increased State funding for food assistance; expansion of school breakfast programs; development of the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs; and, creation of the Farm-to-School program and Childhood Obesity Prevention Program.

Two other key recommendations in the Five Year Plan were: the Department of Health should convene an interagency task force of state directors of food and nutrition programs to reduce program duplication, develop uniform application procedures, encourage the sharing of food preparation and production facilities; and State Government should provide increased incentives for farmland preservation and agricultural production, and to improve the state’s food marketing potential.

Joel Berg of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger, outlined a number of goals for a food policy council in NY:

- Strengthening the Federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of the Food Stamp; WIC; School Lunch; School Breakfast; Summer Food Service; and Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs.



Your VOTE won't count...
if you don't make it to the polls!!!

Hunger Action Network of NYS

Put Democracy in Action

How to Conduct a Voter Mobilization Campaign

1. While doing your voter registration drive, make sure to photocopy voter reg. forms before you mail them (so that you can re-contact or phone those individuals)
2. Obtain phone numbers of your members, residents, fellow tenants, clients, etc. Or set up a plan for door knocking in your building or neighborhood
3. Organize volunteers who can help with phone calls, door knocking and leafleting
4. One week before the election, begin contacting people to remind them that next Tuesday is election day
5. Try to get together groups to go to the polling site together. Arrange any transportation needed (i.e., church van)
6. The day before and the day of the election, set up phones in your office/home and get your volunteers together to do phone banking, door knocking and leafleting
7. Set up a voter mobilization table in the lobby of your building/office to get people to sign up to volunteer or to be called on Election Day
8. Start early on the day of the election to catch people before they leave their homes
9. Remind people that the polls open early and close late (6AM - 9PM)

Hunger Action Network - 212 741-8192 or 518 434-7371

Food Council...from 8

- Increasing the amount – and improving the nutritional quality – of supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs;

- Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally and regionally, including farmers' markets, farm-top-institution projects, and community supported agriculture.

- Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

Establish a SEED Program to Fund Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development Projects

The Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy has introduced legislation to create a SEEDs program to provide matching grants for community food security, empowerment and economic development grants. Projects would: increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible; develop linkages between local farmers and communities; and support job development and training. Potential projects include: training in urban gardening and sales, assist entrepreneurs starting micro-enterprises, supporting farmers' markets in distressed neighborhoods; and, providing food-based educational opportunities for schools.

The proposed legislation however has a number of requirements that would make it difficult for some programs to participate. The local groups would have to provide up to 50% of the costs. The applicants must also have applied for federal community food security funding prior to applying for these grants.

Hunger Action Network's Projects

Departments of Social Services Accountability Project monitors the policies and programs of the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and county DSS offices to ensure adherence to State law and to promote best practices.

Empire State Economic Security Campaign (ES2) statewide organizing, media and policy advocacy to promote income security including affordable housing, universal health care, creation of living-wage jobs, accessible child care, and adequate public assistance benefits.

NYS Revenue Campaign. (www.abetterchoicefornny.org). Hunger Action helps coordinate along with SENSES, FPI & New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness a statewide campaign of several hundred labor, community and faith groups to promote progressive revenue solutions in New York State. This year we will kick off our corporate accountability campaign with regional forums.

Community Food and Nutrition Project provides technical assistance to the state's 3,000 emergency food programs, assists local communities in creating community gardens, helps families to plant fruit and vegetable gardens, connects with farmers to distribute fresh produce to low-income communities, and raises public consciousness about the prevalence of hunger and potential solutions for overcoming it. Our recent Community Food Security Policy Project aims to advocate for improved state food policies, including the establishment of a NYS Food Policy Council.

Faith and Hunger Network increases the advocacy role of the Faith Community in addressing the root causes of hunger. Four regional training conferences are held annually.

Harvest Donation Campaign

Poverty and hunger is a growing problem throughout New York State as thousands of families struggle daily to provide nutritious meals for themselves and their children. When you harvest your garden, over the next few months, consider donating your left over produce to a local food pantry or soup kitchen in your community. By donating a portion of your harvest, you can provide much-needed assistance to food pantries and soup kitchen, who during periods of high demand have to turn away individuals and families in need. In addition, your donation will provide low income New Yorker's with food filled with vitamins and nutrients, which are especially important to children.

If you did not plant any crops in the spring, you can still plant certain vegetables for the fall such as beets, mustard greens, beans, spinach, turnips, or radishes. If you are interested in donating produce to a local food pantry or soup kitchen near you please contact Hunger Action Network at (518) 434-7371 ext. 2# or (212) 741-8192 ext. 3#.

Rising Housing Costs Outpace Wages

U.S. HOUSING PRICES RISE 20% NATIONWIDE, WHILE WAGES FOR KEY COMMUNITY WORKERS REMAIN RELATIVELY FLAT

The median price of a home in the U.S. rose 20 percent in just a year and a half, while at the same time wages for key community workers remained weak, even stagnant, in comparison, according to a study released today by the Center for Housing Policy, the research affiliate of the National Housing Conference.

The study Paycheck to Paycheck: Wages and the Cost of Housing in America found that from fourth quarter 2003 to first quarter 2005 the cost of a median priced home increased from \$186,000 to \$225,000, or 20 percent, while at the same time the annual income needed to qualify to purchase a home grew from \$54,855 to \$71,354. Yet, the wages for key community workers such as elementary school teachers, police officers, licensed practical nurses, retail salespersons and janitors in the majority of cities nationwide remained flat and, in some metropolitan areas, are still significantly below the amount needed to purchase a home.

In addition to providing data for the overall nation, Paycheck to Paycheck compares homeownership and rental affordability findings with median community wages for nearly 200 metropolitan areas and more than 60 occupations.

On the rental side, when comparing 2003 and 2005 data, the metropolitan area findings reveal that based on median income retail salespersons and janitors must pay an excessive portion of their income in order to rent a one- or two-bedroom apartment in the majority of U.S. cities studied.

“Across the nation we are seeing a growing disparity between the skyrocketing home prices of recent years and the minimal increase, if not flattening, in wages for our nation’s community workers,” said Barbara Lipman, research director for the Center for Housing Policy. “Additionally, the disturbing trend of retail salespersons and janitors, and those in similar wage groups, paying in excess

of what is considered affordable in order to rent a one- or two-bedroom apartment continues in metropolitan areas throughout the country.”

The new Paycheck to Paycheck study is provided in online, interactive format and allows users to select and then identify housing affordability for the wide-range of occupations outlined.

New and Renewing Members of Hunger Action

Thanks to all the organizations and individuals who have supported Hunger Action by joining Hunger Action or renewing their membership.

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Congress Extends TANF for the 10th Time

The House of Representatives passed another three-month TANF extension on the morning of June 29 and the Senate followed suit on Thursday, June 30. This is the 10th time TANF has been temporarily extended.

It is still unclear if and when the *Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone Act* (S. 667), known as the PRIDE Act, will come to the Senate floor for a vote. The PRIDE Act, a bi-partisan bill, was passed out of the Senate Finance Committee more than four months ago. Democratic Senate Leader Harry Reid, recently requested unanimous consent to

bring the PRIDE Act to the floor before this current TANF extension ends on September 30th. His request was denied by Senate Leader Frist.

In the House, the Ways and Means Subcommittee passed the Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2005 (HR. 240) in March. This bill imposes new, expensive work mandates, including 40 hours of required work activity with a 70 percent participation rate for all families. HR. 240 reduces access to education and training, requires full family sanctions, and sets aside substantial funding for marriage promotion activities.

Congress is set to take up budget reconciliation once they return from their summer recess in September. Many Republicans are hoping to include TANF in the reconciliation process, which will likely result in significant funding cuts to TANF and many other programs currently included in the PRIDE Act.

Call your member of Congress today and urge them to 1) keep TANF out of budget reconciliation and 2) oppose any bill that would increase work or further restrict access to education, training, and rehabilitative services.

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