

The Social Services Block Grant Coalition
ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN SERVICES

March 28, 2006

To:

The Honorable Bill Frist, Majority Leader
United States Senate, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader
United States Senate, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Frist and Reid:

As you move forward in the consideration of the fiscal year 2007 budget, we strongly encourage you to reject any proposals to reduce funding to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). In recent years SSBG has been recognized as an important and critical source of human service funding for those most in need. Congress has supported increased funding for SSBG as a source of recent hurricane relief, as well as a resource for recovery from the September 11th tragedy. The flexibility of SSBG funding allowed support to reach communities to meet their unique needs and further illustrated its role as a key safety net program.

During the welfare reform debate of 1996 the Congress and the Governors agreed to reduce SSBG funding to \$2.38 billion for 5 years and then return it to its former level of \$2.8 billion in 2003. These reductions were agreed to at a time when members of both parties and both chambers were looking for avenues to balance the federal budget. SSBG contributed to deficit reduction and was to be restored to full funding in 2003 when the fiscal condition improved. Unfortunately, the funding level was reduced in 1998 and is currently \$1.7 billion a year. These cuts in SSBG have forced social services providers to discontinue services to children, families, the elderly and people with disabilities, and reduce benefits for vulnerable families. Further reductions in this program in tandem with cuts already made to programs serving vulnerable population will only hurt more families and force communities to cut critical services.

The Social Services Block Grant has bipartisan and bicameral support and has the strong support of state associations, faith-based organizations, and other service providers and advocates for vulnerable populations. We hope you will join in with us in supporting this important program and reject any and all proposals to reduce SSBG funding.

Sincerely,

Undersigned organizations

Cc:

Budget Committee Chairs and Ranking Minority Members
Appropriation Chairs and Ranking Minority Members

The Social Services Block Grant Coalition:

c/o Kathryn Dyjak, American Public Human Services Association 202-682-0100, John Sciamanna, Child Welfare League of America, 202-639-4919 and Kathy Saile, Lutheran Services in America, (202) 626-7932

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Foundation for the Blind
American Public Human Services Association
Association of Jewish Aging Services
B'nai B'rith International
Catholic Charities USA
Child Welfare League of America
Coalition on Human Needs
Generations United
Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Legal Momentum
Lutheran Services in America
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Child Development Institute
National Child Care Resource and Referral Association
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Council on the Aging
National Leased Housing Association
Prevent Child Abuse America
Results
United Way of America
Voices for America's Children
Volunteers of America

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