

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FY2010 BUDGET RESOLUTION

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TESTIMONY FOR THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

I thank Chairman Spratt and the Members of the Committee for allowing me to testify on this important legislation. I appreciate the Committee's time and energy spent in crafting a budget that addresses the needs of the country at this vital point in history.

President Obama stated during his first address to Congress that a budget should be more than just a list of programs and dollar amounts—it should reflect our values as a Congress. Allow me to briefly mention some of the programs I feel strongly about and would like to urge the Committee to focus on while drafting the Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2010.

1. Affordable Housing

The housing crisis lies at the heart of the current economic crisis. As Chairwoman of the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee on Financial Services, I believe a substantial budget for the **Community and Regional Development** and the **Income Security** functions are vital in order to account for increases in Affordable Housing programs.

I am pleased that the Obama Administration has proposed a HUD budget that increases funding for the Department by 19 percent. I urge the Committee to account for this aggressive budget authorization.

In particular, we must authorize the public housing operating subsidy at \$5.5 billion, as it is currently funded at only 82 percent of need. We must reinvest in our public housing stock to ensure that this housing of last resort is always available to those who need it most.

In addition, authorization for full renewal funding is critically needed for project-based Section 8 contracts in order to prevent thousands of private landlords from leaving the program. In recent years, 10,000 to 15,000 of these units have been converted to market rates. We must also provide \$16.5 billion for Section 8 tenant-based vouchers because shortfalls since 2004 have forced housing agencies to serve 150,000 fewer families.

I commend HUD Secretary Donovan for providing the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund with \$1 billion in the budget. This

program will prevent homelessness and create and preserve affordable housing for very low income households. Funding for the Trust can also be used to help us make good on our long-overdue promise to provide safe, decent and affordable housing to the millions of Gulf Coast families still being affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Congress must also authorize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at \$4.5 billion and preserve the right of communities to borrow against future CDBG funds to finance economic development, housing rehabilitation and large scale physical improvements through Section 108 loan guarantees. I know that the administration has identified the Section 108 program for elimination but this program must be funded at \$6 million, as it is critical to providing economic investment in distressed and disadvantaged areas and it comes at no cost to the Federal government.

Finally, I urge the Budget Committee to account for an increase in HUD funding by an additional \$50 million in order to provide \$360 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. Everyone needs a safe place to call home, and that most certainly includes people who are being treated for this life-threatening condition.

2. Head Start

Few programs in the federal budget provide as high a return on investment as the early childhood services of Head Start and Early

Head Start. But currently, only 3% of eligible children receive Early Head Start services, and 50% of eligible children receive traditional Head Start. It is vital that we continue building on the current funding level to support program investments made to Head Start.

The Recovery Act made a much needed \$2.1 billion investment in Head Start and Early Head Start on top of the \$7.1 billion regular appropriation in the FY09 omnibus. In order to continue expanding Head Start services—or at least make sure no services are cut off for children and families—a higher budget authorization level is needed for Function 500. At a minimum, I recommend an increase of \$1 billion for Head Start and a \$1 billion for Early Head Start over last year's levels.

3. Job Training

With our economy in shambles, we need to be investing more money into a well-trained workforce. The increased funding for the Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act should be maintained in the FY10 budget. Job training for nurses is one area in particular that I have identified as an investment that will reap valuable dividends in the form of increased employment opportunities and improved public health.

I request that the Budget Committee account for \$215 million in FY 2010 for the Nursing Workforce Development programs in Health and Human Services; an increase of almost \$50 million over FY 2009.

4. Minority AIDS Institute

I am deeply concerned about the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly among minorities. Overall, minorities now represent approximately 70% of new AIDS cases. While I believe there is a need for funding increases in all HIV/AIDS programs, I am especially committed to the Minority AIDS Initiative, which targets HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment funds to minority communities.

The Minority AIDS Initiative is funded through several health-related accounts within Function 550. The Initiative received a total of about \$400 million each year since FY 2003 in all accounts combined. I request an increase of \$210 million in Function 550 so that the Minority AIDS Initiative would receive a total of \$610 million in FY 2010 across all accounts combined. This would enable minority communities to scale up their efforts to stop the epidemic and meet the growing needs for prevention education, HIV testing, and AIDS treatment in these communities.

5. Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and it has been adversely impacted by a series of unfortunate events over the

past year. I urge the Budget Committee to provide a robust increase in funding for the International Affairs account in order to allow significant increases in assistance to this impoverished country. The most important accounts for Haiti are Economic Support Funds, Development Assistance, Child Survival and Health, the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative, and the PL-480 food assistance account. I intend to track these accounts throughout the budget and appropriations process and make certain that Haiti receives a share within each account that is proportionate to its needs.

Conclusion

Change has come to the United States, and I look forward to a budget resolution that reflects the high expectations our constituents have for Congress to meet the challenges we face as a nation. Let me again thank the members of the House Budget Committee for their time, and I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks.