



**For Immediate Release  
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### **HUNDREDS FIGHT GOVERNOR'S VETOES THAT HURT NEW YORK'S SOCIAL SERVICES**

New York (July 27, 2010) - The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) joined hundreds of New Yorkers on the steps of City Hall to let Governor Paterson and other elected officials know that much of the discretionary funding he vetoed is still needed to serve New York's most vulnerable. Organizations including the Human Services Council, Council of Senior Centers and Services, Food Bank for New York City, and University Settlement, as well as families, youth and persons living with HIV that depend on these critical services, spoke at the press conference and emphasized the importance of restoring the vetoes that have many of these not-for-profits on the chopping block.

"The State needs to make good on their promises of funding. The Governor's vetoes cut funding not only to current and future programs, but take away funding that was already allocated to not-for-profits," said Michael Stoller, Executive Director of the Human Services Council. "The vetoes cut funding to programs that are by no means pork, such as care for the elderly and programs for youth, and if these vetoes are not rescinded, programs will close and not-for-profits will not be reimbursed for services they already provided based on promised funding."

In addition to service loss, these vetoes have an impact on jobs in the not-for-profit sector. "Jobs provided by social assistance not-for-profits are absolutely critical to the economic viability of many neighborhoods throughout New York City," said James Parrott, Chief Economist of the Fiscal Policy Institute. "As a sector, not-for-profit organizations employ 165,000 people in NYC, 80% of the workforce is black, Hispanic, or Asian. The Social Assistance sector is particularly important as an employer in Brooklyn and the Bronx where it accounts for 10-11% of all private sector jobs. It is also one of the few sectors that have added jobs over the past decade" continued Parrott.

Not-for-profit workers have been holding their breath over whether their organizations and jobs will receive the funding that was promised. Lucia Rivieccio, LCSW Director of STEPS to End Family Violence, a Manhattan-based abuse prevention organization says, "Without this funding, our ability to serve over 4,000 victims each month is sharply curtailed. Life-saving services such as crisis counseling, safety planning, and legal advocacy are critical to victims of domestic violence and prevent greater future cost for shelter, medical services, public assistance, legal services, and workplace productivity. Every \$1 spent on domestic violence services saves \$10 in future medical, employment, mental health, shelter, and safety-related expenses."

These vetoes cut funding for human services of all kinds, including senior services, afterschool programs, domestic violence, college access programs, mental health services, youth services, and more. The State Office for the Aging alone receives \$10 million in discretionary grants. Carole Vahey, a senior citizen receiving transportation services said, "I am so very thankful for the transportation that my senior center provides. It allows me to get to my doctor, the senior center, and my supermarket. Without it I would not have food in my home or socialize with my friends."

Kaitlyn Chow, an 8-year-old in University Settlement's STRIDE after-school program, which is at risk of closing if the vetoes stand, said, "STRIDE teaches us new math and some cool science. If I didn't have this program, I'd be at home, bored and alone."

Krystal, who lives in Rockaway in Queens, is a student at Pacific High School and participated in the Welfare Rights Initiative class at Hunter College, said that "The Welfare Rights Initiative class taught me what it takes to be a true leader and gave me the confidence that I can be one, too. Now, I look forward to experiences where I can practice public speaking and make positive changes in my community."

Gary Sneed with the AIDS Service Center of New York stated, "We don't need anymore cuts while we're still healing from our wounds. We are wounded by the lack of education. We are wounded by the lack of child care. We are wounded by the lack of care to our elderly. We are wounded by the shortcomings of care to people who are living with HIV and AIDS." Mr. Sneed added, "I say to the Governor and the people of New York, we can't afford to cut back on these services that help to cut back on the destruction to our communities so please don't cut back on the services that save the lives of so many New Yorkers."

Guadalupe Perez, a woman who survived domestic violence stated, "I'm an example to show that domestic violence programs are working. My daughter and I received helped form VIP

[Violence Intervention Program] -- they are really good. If the cuts start, most of the low-income mothers and children will be affected." Ms. Perez added, "Domestic violence programs gave me a lot of individual and group therapy and for my daughter. Thanks to the domestic violence program I am alive. I survived domestic violence and I feel healthy physically and mentally and I hope we will find a better future."

The State legislature is expected to come back into session this week to continue working on the budget, which is already fifteen weeks past due. Representatives of the rally are planning a week of State actions and public events to give thousands of New Yorkers a platform to be heard during budget negotiations.

### **About the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)**

The **Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies** is a membership organization with almost 300 community-based social service agencies and church-based human service programs in its network. FPWA strengthens its members through management and technical assistance; training and workshops; policy and advocacy services; and through a variety of grant programs, including camp scholarships, a holiday toy drive, and individual grants for emergency needs through its participation in the New York Times Neediest Cases fund. [www.fpwa.org](http://www.fpwa.org)

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