



NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby Position on Budget Priorities

BACKGROUND: We are in a time when a just balance between supporting a safety net for members of our community who are at serious risk and responsible provision for future generations is most in jeopardy. The last eight years have moved us from surplus and reasonable debt to the highest deficits and debt in the nation's history. Infrastructure has been allowed to deteriorate, the safety net is riddled with holes, education at all levels is faltering, children are being allowed to fall into deep poverty and tax policy predominantly benefits the wealthiest among us.

NETWORK advocates for the following:

- **FOCUS SPENDING ON MEETING HUMAN NEEDS** in ways which simultaneously are **STIMULATIVE TO THE ECONOMY** by:
 - Increasing funding for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) for two years. Increase funding to 120% of current value, to counteract the rapid increase in food costs.
 - Increase, for one year, funding for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (seniors)
 - Increase, for two years, funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) which supplies food to food banks. Commercial donations have decreased tremendously at this time when federal support has been cut in half in recent years.
- **PROVIDING STATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO MEET THEIR SHARE OF MEDICAID (INCLUDING CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE) AND SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANTS** as state revenues are falling due to high unemployment rates and declining home values. Concurrently, the pressures on families escalate and violence is more likely to erupt. This causes increased need for social workers and other providers when their numbers have been cut. States are required to maintain balanced budgets therefore without additional funds their only options are to cut programs.
- **RESTORE FUNDING TO CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT** enabling states to secure support payments for the custodial parent. There is almost a four-fold benefit for each dollar spent on enforcement, and the custodial parent is less needy of other government services.
- **INCREASE, EVEN FURTHER, THE FUNDING FOR HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP)** as the recent increase was moving from a point of only 14% of eligible households being able to receive assistance. In addition to saving energy by helping with efficient appliances and insulation, this stimulates job creation in green industries for persons with all levels of training and education.
- **STIMULATE THE ECONOMY BY CREATING JOBS**, rather than hoping that tax shelters will encourage those with the greatest resources to put money back into the United States economy. Recent history has shown they have chosen to invest outside U.S. borders. Tax policy should reward domestic job creation.

12/15/08

Contact: Marge Clark, BVM, mclark@networklobby.org, 202-347-9797 x211