

[HUMAN SERVICES LETTER TO LEGISLATOR]

Legislator Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear [LEGISLATOR NAME]:

While the \_\_\_\_\_(ORG NAME)\_\_\_\_\_ fully recognizes the need to respond to current deficit projections and difficult decisions that must be made in an economic crisis, we are deeply concerned about many of the proposals contained in the Governor's Executive Budget and the impact they will have on fragile families and individuals in New York. As members of the Human Services Council (HSC), a non-partisan intermediary between government and the human services community, we are compelled to bring certain concerns to your attention.

The inclusion of not-for-profits as employers eligible to be taxed under the MTA Mobility Tax draws desperately needed funds from the already strained arsenals of human service organizations. The Governor is now proposing to increase the tax structure from 0.34 percent of payroll for all Metropolitan Commuter Transportation District (MCTD) counties to 0.54 percent in New York City and reduce the rate to 0.17 percent for employers and the rest of MCTD. This additional cost will inevitably curtail the ability of not-for-profits to meet the needs of the communities they work in. For example, **[IF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS SPECIFIC DATA ON HOW THIS WILL EFFECT YOU, PLEASE INCLUDE IT HERE, EX. # CLIENTS NOT SERVED, # STAFF LOST, PROBLEMS CREATED.]** We urge you to:

- 1) Exempt not-for-profits from the MTA payroll tax, or,
- 2) Implement a mechanism for the State to provide not-for-profits with the funding to help pay for this additional cost.

The Governor's budget also proposes to eliminate nearly all TANF funded programs. The elimination of these programs will severely jeopardize our ability to help families maintain and achieve self-sufficiency. Without these critical supportive services, we can expect to see an increase in the public assistance (PA) rolls and higher long-term costs for New York given the time limitations associated with the use of federal funds to support families receiving PA. **[IF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS SPECIFIC DATA ON HOW THE PROPOSED CUTS WILL EFFECT THE PROGRAMS RUN BY YOUR ORGANIZATION, PLEASE INCLUDE IT HERE, EX. # CLIENTS NOT SERVED, # STAFF LOST, BIGGER / MORE EXPENSIVE PROBLEMS CREATED IF THE SERVICES YOU PROVIDE ARE CUT. SEE ATTACHED LIST OF FUNDING STREAMS PROPOSED FOR ELIMINATION]** We ask you to support the restoration of TANF funded social service programs. This is not only in the best interest of New York's neediest families, but is also the right approach for the long-term financial interests of the State.

Human services keep the economically challenged strong and self-sufficient. They are especially crucial in times of financial instability such as this. We ask that you ensure the State raises the funds needed to continue critical human service programs by supporting these revenue and cost-saving options:

- **Increase Cigarette Excise Tax by \$1.00 per Pack.** The State cigarette excise tax would be increased from \$2.75 per pack to \$3.75 per pack, which would

represent the highest cigarette tax in the nation. This increase would result in a combined State and local tax of \$5.25 per pack in New York City.

- **Impose a New Excise Tax on Beverage Syrups and Soft Drinks.** An excise tax would be imposed on beverage syrups and soft drinks at a rate of \$7.68 per gallon for syrups and \$1.28 per gallon for bottled soft drinks and powders. On average, this will increase the cost of the tax on soft drinks by one penny per ounce. This tax exempts dietary aids, infant formula, and milk.
- **Prison Closures.** The prison population is projected to decline by 1,100 inmates in the current fiscal year and by another 1,000 inmates in the 2010-11 fiscal year. The consolidation and closures of penal facilities will reduce the DOCS workforce to 637 staff, including 17 managerial staff. These actions will save \$7 million in 2010-11 and \$52 million in 2011-12. For juvenile detention facilities, the SFY 2010-11 Budget recommendations include the rightsizing of Tryon Residential Campus, Annsville Residential Center, and Lansing Residential Center. In total 180 residential beds and 251 FTE positions will be eliminated by January 2011. Anticipated savings for SFY 2010-11 from right-sizing these juvenile facilities are \$2.9 million.

Preventive and supportive community-based human services yield a significant return on investment by reducing more lengthy and expensive care today and in the future. \_\_\_(ORG NAME)\_\_\_ and the Human Services Council appreciate the difficult financial conditions that our State and nation are facing, but urge thoughtful consideration of the needs of New Yorkers as they, too, struggle in this recession. \_\_\_(ORG NAME)\_\_\_ stands ready to meet with you at any time to discuss these issues in depth. Please call us at \_\_\_\_\_ if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Executive Director