



Legal Assistance  
Resource Center  
of Connecticut, Inc.



## **Nonprofits and Social Service Advocates Call on Governor and Legislators to Protect Vital Services for Families and Low-income Residents**

Several nonprofit and social service advocacy organizations issued the following statement concerning the state budget and the upcoming special session. These groups are the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, Connecticut Association for Human Services, Connecticut Voices for Children, End Hunger Connecticut!, and Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut.

Governor Malloy and the General Assembly have tough decisions to make in the coming days as they look to balance the state budget. The Governor has proposed a plan that would give broad authority to the Executive Branch to find savings in state agencies through layoffs or cuts to programs.

“We believe that legislators must have the opportunity to review and approve or reject any cuts to programs,” said Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut. “As Connecticut residents struggle through a difficult economy, policymakers should avoid further cuts that would undermine supports for our most vulnerable residents when they need these services most.”

The demand for human services has continued to grow during the recession as more individuals and families find themselves in need of assistance. 378,000 people now get SNAP food assistance benefits, up more than 50% since March 2008. More than 400,000 children, parents, and pregnant women rely on HUSKY health care coverage and another 150,000 seniors, persons with disabilities, and other low-income individuals receive health care through other parts of Medicaid.

“People who just a few years ago made charitable contributions to support organizations which provide basic needs are now requesting services from these organizations,” said Lucy Nolan, Executive Director of End Hunger Connecticut!

Cuts to cost-effective, preventative services only result in higher costs to the state as people resort to more expensive services, such as the emergency room, or end up in prison. Further, some cuts may jeopardize the state’s ability to draw down federal funds that are important to our communities.

The nonprofits that provide health and human services on the state’s behalf have not received a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in 3 years, while the average COLA over the past 20 years is less than 1%. Additionally, many programs received budget reductions of 2 to 5% in FY09 and FY10.

“During these years of reduced funding the costs related to running programs, such as health insurance, worker’s compensation and utilities have continued to rise leaving many nonprofits and the safety net in a precarious position,” said Ron Cretaro, Executive Director of Connecticut Association of Nonprofits.

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The Governor's new budget framework projects \$47 million in cuts to the Department of Social Services budget in the first year of the biennium and \$75 million in the second year. Achieving these savings will be devastating to the essential programs and services of the Department. In contrast, closing corporate tax loopholes that benefit multi-state businesses over small, local businesses through "combined reporting" reforms could raise \$88 million. This reform would create a more level playing field for local businesses and help avert cuts that would damage our economy.

Recognizing the difficult decisions that must be made, the deficit should be closed in ways that minimize the impact on low-income families and struggling individuals. Further cuts to programs that support low-income residents will put their health and safety at risk and will cost the state more in the long run. We urge Governor Malloy and legislators to protect vital services for our state's vulnerable families.

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Contacts: Liza Andrews, Public Policy Director, Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, (860) 525-5080  
Sharon Langer, Senior Policy Fellow, Connecticut Voices for Children, (203) 498-4240, cell: 860-490-5441  
Lucy Nolan, Executive Director, End Hunger Connecticut!, 860-560-2100  
Jane McNichol, Executive Director, Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, 860-278-5688 ext. 201