

April 4, 2006

Dear Senator or Representative:

As advocates for family well-being, we are alarmed that the President's FY2007 budget calls for the elimination of the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Elimination of the SIPP would make it more difficult for researchers to assess the economic and social situation of the country's families and the impact of state and national policies. The lack of accurate information will inevitably have negative consequences for low-income families and children.

Many experts believe that the SIPP is the nation's best source of data about poverty and income. For example, the National Academy of Sciences states, "SIPP should become the nation's primary source of income statistics... [Other national surveys] can never be designed to provide the same extent of detail or achieve the same quality of reporting as in SIPP."

The SIPP provides essential information on the extent to which programs -- such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Social Security, and unemployment insurance -- meet families' basic needs and promote upward mobility. The SIPP also tracks health insurance coverage, and provides more in-depth information than any other government survey on work/family issues, such as maternity leave. Since the SIPP is a longitudinal survey that tracks the same families over time, the SIPP's data are richer and more detailed than other surveys. In addition, the SIPP compares well in terms of accuracy to other surveys. If we lose the SIPP for even one year, then the continuity of data that makes the SIPP unique will be lost.

For good policy, we need good data. The Census Bureau has proposed creating a new survey to replace the SIPP in 2008. This will inevitably result in a loss of data, as experience shows it takes about seven years to develop broad national surveys. As workers, parents and families, we cannot afford to wait years to learn how today's policies are working.

As you consider legislation and appropriations this year, we, the undersigned organizations, urge you to ensure that Congress continues to fully fund the SIPP.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

9to5, National Association of Working Women
ActionAid International USA
Alliance for Children and Families
Alternatives to Marriage Project
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of University Women
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
Arab American Institute Foundation
Center for Community Change
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Housing Policy
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Center for Women Policy Studies
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for Health Services Research
Coalition on Human Needs
Consumer Federation of America

Corporation for Enterprise Development
Families USA
Food Research and Action Center
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Institute for America's Future
Legal Aid Society
Legal Momentum
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Missionary Oblates
Mothers & More
The Mothers Movement Online
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council on Aging
National Health Law Program
National Housing Conference
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Welfare Engine
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center

NCA Union Retirees
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Washington Office
RESULTS
Summit Health Institute for Research and
Education, Inc.
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Church of Christ Network for Environmental &
Economic Responsibility
United for a Fair Economy
USAAction
Welfare Law Center
Wider Opportunities for Women
YWCA USA

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Alliance to Defend Health Care (MA)
Asset Building Strategies (CA)
Association for Children of New Jersey (NJ)
Because People Matter paper (CA)
Bicycle Advocacy Group (NM)
California Partnership (CA)
California Reinvestment Coalition (CA)
Center for Full Employment and Price Stability (MO)
Center for Public Policy Priorities (TX)
Center on Social Disparities in Health (CA)
CHILDREN AT RISK (TX)
Children's Action Alliance (AZ)
Children's Alliance (WA)
Citizen Action of New York (NY)
Coalition for the Homeless (NY)
Community Action Project of Tulsa County (OK)
Connecticut Call to Action (CT)
Connecticut Voices for Children (CT)
Caroline Carey, Consultant (CO)
Context Business Consulting (NJ)
DeLaroche & Company, Inc. (CA)
Dynamim Company (MI)
Economic Development Corporation (CA)
Every Child Counts (IA)
Fiscal Policy Institute (NY)
Forest Hills PA Borough Council – Chair, Planning &
Zoning (PA)
Four Bands Community Fund, Inc. (SD)
Greater Hartford Legal Aid (CT)
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (PA)
Greater Rochester Interfaith Health Care Coalition (NY)
Greenlining Institute (CA)
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human
Rights (IL)
Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless
Issues, Inc. (IN)

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (IA)
Iowa Coalition for Housing & the Homeless (IA)
JOBS NOW Coalition (MN)
Just Harvest: A Center for Action Against Hunger (PA)
Kansas National Organization for Women (KS)
Keystone Research Center (PA)
Kunz Center for the Study of Work & Family (OH)
Long Island Health Access Monitoring Project (NY)
Latino Health Access (CA)
Little Gables Neighborhood Association (FL)
Maine Center for Economic Policy (ME)
Maine Children's Alliance (ME)
Maine Women's Lobby (ME)
Marc August International (CA)
Martha Baker Consulting LLC (NY)
Montgomery County Department of Social
Services (VA)
New Jersey Citizen Action (NJ)
New Mexico Voices for Children (NM)
North Carolina Budget & Tax Center (NC)
Oregon Human Rights Coalition (OR)
Pambeal Group for Peace (ME)
Partners in Ending Hunger (ME)
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc. (PA)
Policy Matters Ohio (OH)
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (NV)
Salt Lake Community Action Program (UT)
San Francisco Gray Panthers (CA)
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (NY)
Service Employees International Union Local 535 (CA)
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center (SC)
Texas Asset Building Coalition (TX)
The Center for Community Solutions (OH)
The Piton Foundation (CO)
Towson Campus Greens (MD)
UAW Retirees Chapter (MI)
UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and
Education (CA)
Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UT)
Urban Justice Center (NY)
Utah Community Action Partnership Association (UT)
Virginia Poverty Law Center (VA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children (AL)
Voices for Utah Children (UT)
Washington Association of Churches (WA)
Washington County Community Partnership (MO)
West Virginia Citizen Action Group (WV)
Western Center on Law and Poverty (CA)
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WI)

cc: Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Department of Commerce
Director Charles Louis Kincannon, U.S. Census Bureau