

NCH . NEWS . . .

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Hello,

This is the August issue of NCH News.

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Lessons from a Candidate Who Sought to End Poverty- Part II

I, President (_____--fill in the blank) of the U.S. and How I Ended Poverty. A True Story of the Future. (Part II)*

On Inauguration Day, I, President _____ (fill in the blank) hereby proclaim that I will no longer accept homelessness and poverty in this rich country.

One in eight Americans lives in poverty and the numbers are rising. Our political parties either cater to the rich or to the middle class, leaving the low-income population behind.

I, like Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Lyndon Baines Johnson before me, declare poverty to be one of the biggest issues facing America. I will set benchmarks for eliminating poverty. Let's call it an adjustment of American priorities that will take place not in ten years, but in my first term in office.

To pay for this, we will end our legacy of imperialism, and use the money to address our new priorities here at home.

The First 24 Hours of My Presidency

After finishing my rather long Inaugural speech, I will return to the White House lawn where I will pitch a tent and live outside until we achieve the goal of ending poverty in America.

I'll take along my cell phone and a laptop, so I can conduct the country's business. The First Lady/Spouse will join me as well.

Plans of Action:

The First 100 Days of My Presidency

...bethesdahosting.com/.../397_2007...

I will forego my \$400,000 annual salary and instead will be your President working at a minimum wage salary. In other words, I will be making \$7.00 an hour, as per the established federal minimum wage regulations. Doing the math, if I work at least 40 hours a week for 52 weeks of the year, I will earn about \$379,616 less than my predecessor.

I will not move back inside until every American is permanently housed. I will then start to pay rent like any other American, 30% of my minimum wage salary.

I also will invite my closest neighbors, the homeless people living across the street in Lafayette Park, to stay in the various unused bedrooms in the White House in what can only be called the “Best Public Housing in the Country.”

Emergency/Immediate Measures

Homeless emergency shelters will still be around, but these places will function instead more like the emergency rooms of hospitals where you stay as long as you need to. I will order every government building to stay open at night so they can function as emergency night shelters.

I will ask churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques to do the same.

Children, who make up 25% of the overall homeless population, will be the first ones to get help. If not helped, these children are destined to become the homeless adults of the future.

All local/state/federal elected public officials shall be required to spend a week living on the streets in the largest city in their respective home states until every American is housed. They will be offered the same benefit levels as the poorest among us with food stamps and the same health care offered to those on Medicaid/Medicare. We will ask Congress to reduce the salary of every federal elected officeholder and those approved by the Congress for the federal executive branch to the same monthly salary received by those on Social Security disability. A compromise could be to increase the disability payments to a more reasonable level that will allow many of these individuals to live without the fear of having to move into a shelter. This will keep office-holders in touch with the 12.7%, or almost 40 million Americans who live below the poverty line.

I will ask the U.S. Congress to pass federal legislation making it illegal for cities to adopt laws targeting homeless people for acts such as sleeping, camping, sitting, or panhandling. I am forced to do this, as no city is able to shelter all of its homeless citizens.

Every homeless person who so desires will receive a laptop computer donated by the computer companies so they can connect with the rest of the world and use the Internet to help them get out of their homelessness/low income status.

As our nation's carmakers are struggling and sales are lagging, every homeless/low income person should get a free fuel-efficient car for either driving to work or living inside it.

Our nation's coffee shops should give homeless/low income people a “daily fix” of one free cup of coffee. All coffee shops will henceforth be designated as “homeless-friendly” businesses serving the public interest in exchange for their unreasonably high prices.

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest private employer, will be unionized at the request/demand by their so-called “associates.” Their employees will become full-time workers (40 hours a week), and they will finally receive health insurance. I will support the expansion of unions to represent all workers by reducing all corporate friendly barriers to union organizing.

Long-Term Solutions

I will restore the federal low income-housing budget to what it was back in 1979--\$83 billion compared to \$33.6 billion today. I will work with the mayors of American cities to create a federal housing policy.

The countless abandoned buildings which plague our inner cities will be turned over to non-profit or municipalities who will provide the resources and training necessary to enable homeless/low income people to repair these homes. This will be a 21st Century version of the Homestead Act of 1860.

5/15/2009

NCH News Email Newsletter

Victims of domestic violence, a leading cause of homelessness among women, will no longer be forced to flee their homes, winding up on the streets or in shelters. Rather, the victims will stay put in their own homes, and the batterers will be sent either to jail or to shelters designed just for them.

People released from prison will be guaranteed admission into halfway houses with appropriate employment and case management/counseling services. This will put an end to the established practice of releasing prisoners to the streets without support, setting them up for failure. This same policy will hold for men and women graduating from mental health/alcohol treatment centers.

The minimum wage will henceforth be replaced by a universal living wage.

A salary cap shall be placed on anyone whose goal is to become a CEO or just rich.

New charters will be written for every corporation doing business in America so that their impact on the community would be factored into their bottom line. So, the amount of pollution, layoffs, salaries that are too low requiring government assistance would be factored into their bottom line profit and loss statement for investors.

I will come up with a 21st Century version of the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) programs. I got my inspiration for this approach from the words of the late President Ronald Reagan who said, "I think the best possible social program is a job."

Health Insurance. Free or low cost if you are homeless/low income. Expensive if you happen to be rich.

For homeless/low income people with disabilities, I declare these citizens are entitled to treatment on demand for mental health and substance abuse issues.

Expensive residential treatment program catering to celebrities and sports players (e.g. Betty Ford Treatment Center in California) shall set aside 25% of their treatment beds for homeless/low income people at no cost.

As Commander-in-Chief, I make a commitment that any person who serves their country in our armed forces shall not be allowed to become homeless.

State and federal voting laws will be liberalized making it easier for homeless/low income people to vote. No photo ID or mailing address may be required. I will establish a separate branch of government to oversee elections. This branch will be independent and not subject to the political whims of current office holders. I hope to open up the electoral process so that my successor in 2016 could be a homeless/low income person. I would like to hear political parties talking about neglecting the rich and serving homeless people and low-income citizens in the future. The only way that this will be done is if elections are not bought and sold by the corporate and privileged class.

Poor people will be exempt from all taxes. When they break over the federal poverty guideline, then they pay taxes.

Attacking the Root Causes:

I will ask the U.S. Congress to adopt the right to housing like many other countries from around the world.

We will now promise every American the right to housing and health care even if they cannot afford it.

Welfare and food stamps will no longer be necessary, as every American will have a guaranteed annual income.

Since an education is the best way to break out of poverty, a two or four-year college education will now be free as young people are our future in exchange for national service.

The U.S. Congress will issue an apology for allowing poverty to exist/grow and for people to be trapped in poverty for so long in the richest nation in the world.

5/15/2009

NCH News Email Newsletter

A new museum will be built along the Mall in the nation's capital. This "Museum on Poverty" will remind Americans how poverty remained unchecked in the last century and for the first ten years of this new one. Poverty is something of our past, and not of the present or our future.

*Part I was published in the July 2007 edition of NCH News. **Lessons from a Candidate Who Sought to End Poverty** (www.nationalhomeless.org).

Michael Stoops is the Acting Executive Director of the Washington, DC-based National Coalition for the Homeless (www.nationalhomeless.org). The inspiration for this pledge/initiative to end poverty in America in the 21st Century comes from Upton Sinclair's **I, Governor of California and How I Ended Poverty. A True Story of the Future. 1934**. We truly hope this will inspire/educate the candidates running for President of the U.S. in 2008.

[National Housing Trust Fund Continues to Gain Momentum](#)

Lucas Hunt is an intern working with NCH for the summer. He is a rising sophomore at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN

In late June, Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee; Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity; Jim Ramstad (R-MN); and other members of Congress introduced the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007 (H.R. 2895). The bill establishes a National Housing Trust Fund reserving funds for the production, rehabilitation and preservation of 1.5 million affordable housing units for low and very-low income people, stipulating that at least 75% of funds provided go to extremely low-income households (earning below 30% of median income).

The National Affordable Housing Trust Fund will be financed by the proposed legislation H.R. 1427, the GSE Affordable Housing Fund, savings from the Federal Housing Administration resulting from the enactment of H.R. 1852, the Expanding American Homeownership Act, and any additional sources of funding to be designated to the Trust Fund.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Trust Fund should be used for the production of new housing, preservation of existing federally assisted housing, and rehabilitation of existing private market affordable housing. The Trust Fund should be primarily used for rental housing.

Furthermore, states, localities, or non-profit organizations that receive Trust Fund assistance will need to match the federal funds in the following manner. If the entity uses state, local, or private resources for the match, it will receive two federal Trust Fund dollars for every dollar it provides. If an entity uses state or locally controlled federal dollars for the match, it will receive one Trust Fund dollar for every dollar of match it provides. This match requirement may be waived for jurisdictions that demonstrate fiscal distress.

This is not the first time there has been a call for a housing trust fund. Nearly ten years ago the National Coalition for the Homeless proposed the Community Housing Investment Trust, a precursor to the current National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act. Later, Senator John Kerry (D-MA) and then House Representative Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced bills establishing the Housing Trust Fund Act in the 106th, 107th, and 108th Congress. In addition to stand-alone bills, the National Housing Trust Fund has served as the foundation of the Bringing America Home Act, introduced in both the 108th and 10th Congresses, the National Coalition for the Homeless' landmark piece of legislation designed to both prevent and end homelessness. NCH plans to include the Trust Fund in the Bringing America Home Act to be introduced in this Congress, later this summer.

We believe that each member of society, including people experiencing homelessness, has a right to decent, accessible, affordable, and permanent housing. It is society's responsibility to provide such housing for those who can not secure it through their own means. The passage of the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007 is an integral part in the assurance of affordable housing to all low-income individuals and the end of the affordable housing crisis in the United States.

A hearing will be held on HR 2895 on 9:30 am Thursday, July 19th, 402 Cannon House Office Building

Battling Bumfights

Sarah Fontaine is an intern working with NCH for the summer. She is a rising senior at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA and is majoring in Sociology.

Beginning in 2001 and continuing through August of 2006, a series of seven videos depicting homeless individuals being coerced into doing inhumane and degrading acts were produced and sold by four young men. Ryan McPherson, Zachary Bubeck, Daniel J. Tanner, and Michael Slyman continue to refuse to admit there is anything wrong with their DVD series, Bum Fights, which demonstrates a blatant disregard for the rights and common humanity of homeless people.

For those of you who have never viewed these DVDs, they can be described as revolting and barbarous. In some of the more graphic scenes, one can see a homeless man drinking urine he has been told is beer, a homeless man tearing his own tooth out with pliers, a homeless man breaking another homeless man's ankle, and two homeless people having sex against a dumpster. These DVDs have been strongly linked to the recent surge in beatings and even killings of homeless people in the United States and in Canada. The DVD collection is banned in many European countries, including the United Kingdom.

What is perhaps the most appalling aspect of the situation is the fact that major U.S. retailers, including Tower Records, Borders Books, Best Buy, Amazon.com, Trans World Entertainment (through warehouse.com), Virgin Mega stores, Yahoo Shopping and Circuit City continue to sell the DVD collections. In the past, when pressured by NCH and our supporters, some companies, like Amazon.com, Borders, and Best Buy, have ceased selling the collection, only to resume the sales a few months later. After NCH's most recent campaign, Circuit City and Amazon.com have removed the DVDs from their websites.

Why does our society so disdain the homeless population that we allow their exploitation to be specifically marketed to our youth? If this were any other group of people being targeted and misrepresented, be it black, white, Latino, Asian, women, men, young people, or gay people, these DVDs would not be sold and their creators would be in jail. Can you imagine a DVD series entitled "Fag Fights" depicting drunk homosexuals fighting, drinking, doing drugs, and being victimized and targeted because of their sexual orientation? Such discrimination and exploitation would be considered illegal. Every man or woman who considered themselves an advocate for gay rights or at all concerned about equality would be up in arms about the DVDs, and rightfully so.

And so we arrive back at the same question, why is there so little public outcry over the homeless exploitation manufactured by the Bum Fights DVDs? I have heard people cite reasons such as free speech; to that I would ask where do free speech and moral regard collide? Other companies place the onus on the consumer, reminding customers that simply because the retailers choose to carry the DVD collection does not force customers to buy it. They also note that there are many other DVDs and books other customers find objectionable, and they cannot make everyone happy.

We, the consumers and advocates, must not be afraid to ask why these corporations choose to support films in which homeless men and women are harmed and exploited. We must remind the CEOs that through the sale of these DVDs, their companies are sending the message that they support the degradation of the homeless population.

I would ask you, our loyal reader and supporter, to consider or reconsider your stance on the Bum Fights issue. Below, we have listed the companies that continue to sell these DVDs, along with the names and addresses of their CEOs. We have succeeded in stopping the sales before. Unless these companies know that people are concerned about their retail policies, they will not change. If people who care do not continue advocating for our friends in the homeless community, who will?

Borders Books

George Jones, CEO

100 Phoenix Drive

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

...bethesdahosting.com/.../397_2007...

Towers Records

Joe D'Amico, CEO

2500 Del Monte St.

West Sacramento, CA 95691

Best Buy

Brad Anderson

P.O. Box 9312

Minneapolis, MN 55440

Yahoo! Inc.

Terry Semel

701 First Avenue

Sunnyvale, CA 94089

Trans World Entertainment

Bob Higgans

38 Corporate Circle

Albany, NY 12203

Briefing Held on Homeless-Directed Violence

On Tuesday, July 10th Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson sponsored a briefing on violence against homeless people. The briefing was cosponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) and highlighted two pieces of legislation introduced by Representative Johnson this past May, the Hate Crimes against the Homeless Enforcement and Statistics Acts (H.R. 2217 and 2216 respectively). These two bills strive to add homeless persons as a protected class under federal hate crimes statutes, allowing stricter penalties and mandating the U.S. Department of Justice to monitor attacks.

The briefing was moderated by Sue Watlov Phillips, a current NCH Board member and former executive director for NCH. She currently is the director of Elim Transitional Housing in Minnesota. Featured speakers included Jessica Schuler, a policy analyst from NCH, noted hate crimes expert Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study on Hate and Extremism at California State University San Bernardino and Robert Nasdor, Legal director for the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

Both NCH and NLCHP have worked at the forefront of the fight to end violence against the homeless, advocating at both the state and federal level. Beginning in 1999, each year NCH has released Hate, Violence and Death on Main Street U.S.A., our annual publication monitoring attacks against homeless persons. In addition, since 2002 NCH has documented nationwide efforts to criminalize homeless populations. In both 2003 and 2006 NLCHP jointly co-authored these reports, entitled "A Dream Denied".

This past year has been a landmark in the effort to stop homeless-directed violence, seeing hate crimes legislation introduced in seven states and at the federal level. Since 1999 there have been 614 documented attacks on homeless people, including 189 lethal incidents. This past year (2006) was the worst in the eight years since NCH began its publication, increasing by 65% from 2005. The fight has been long and difficult, yet necessary. Addressing the bill's opponenets, Brian Levin, the keynote speaker at the event, argued "From a purely criminological perspective, physical attacks against the homeless in this country are indistinguishable from

other hate crimes-with one major exception. While offender characteristics, motive, deterrence, injury and weaponry are basically analogous, prevalence differs significantly. The homeless face a rate of victimization that far exceeds that of traditionally covered groups. The more reliable statistics arising from homicide data and victimization studies indicate that the homeless are among the nation's most criminally vulnerable population."

Federal Legislative Updates

Homeless Assistance Programs

- On June 21, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs held a hearing on S. 1518, the Community Partnership to End Homelessness Act of 2007 (CPEHA) The bill, introduced on May 24 by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Wayne Allard (R-CO), reauthorizes HUD McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs. The witnesses were Roy Bernardi, Deputy Secretary, HUD; Adrian Fenty, Mayor, District of Columbia; Shirley Franklin, Mayor, Atlanta; Lloyd Pendleton, Director, Homeless Task Force, State of Utah Division of Housing and Community Development; Carol Gundlach, Executive Director, Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Moises Loza, Executive Director, Housing Assistance Council; Linda Glassman, Board Secretary, National AIDS Housing Coalition; and Nan Roman, President, National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- July 22nd marks the 20th anniversary of the passage of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which encompasses the majority of federal homeless assistance dollars. The occasion is an opportunity to both celebrate the strides made to end homelessness in the past twenty years, as well as mark the significant advances still required to prevent and end homelessness. Celebration events will include a "Bittersweet Anniversary" press conference on Capitol Hill, 402 Cannon House Office Building at 9:30 a.m. on July 19. Key legislators and advocates on homelessness have been invited to attend. (For more information on NHTF please see our 'National Housing Trust Fund Gains Momentum'

Housing

- On June 28th Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, introduced the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007 (H.R. 2895). The bill establishes a National Housing Trust Fund reserving funds for the production, rehabilitation and preservation of 1.5 million affordable housing units for low and very-low income people, stipulating that at least 75% of funds provided go to extremely low-income households (earning below 30% of median income). A hearing on the bill is scheduled for 10:00 AM on July 19th, 2007.
- The Section 8 Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA), H.R. 1851, passed the full House of Representatives on July 12. Major provisions within the bill will address the long standing concerns with voucher formulas, authorize 20,000 new vouchers each year for the next five years and simplifies rent calculations while retaining caps on resident rents at 30% of adjusted income. The bill passed by a vote of 333-83, showing strong support despite threats of a White House veto.

Appropriations

- The full House and Senate Appropriations Committees passed their FY08 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies spending bills on July 11th and 12th, respectively. The House bill is expected to be considered by the full House of Representatives during the week of July 23 while the Senate bill is not expected to go until after the August recess. Major provisions in both the House and Senate bills include: increased funding to the public housing operating fund, rejected proposed cuts to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities and HOPE VI programs by the president, increased dollars for public housing capital funds by about \$61 million. In addition the Senate increased voucher renewal costs by \$500 million and \$75 million for new vouchers for homeless veterans, the House designated 30 million for homeless vets. (www.nlihc.org)

NCH on the Road

Stay up-to-date on NCH's upcoming speaking events throughout the county

August

Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau:

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau is a program of the National Coalition for the Homeless that is comprised of people who are or have been homeless and works to educate the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it.

August 6th Christ Church Andover, MA

In addition, NCH will be speaking at 6 events throughout the DC/VA/MD area

In 2006 we spoke to over 280 groups, 43 states and nearly 17,000 people. If you are interested in bringing our Faces of Homelessness Panel to your school, please contact Michael O'Neill, Speakers' Bureau Coordinator, at moneill@nationalhomeless.org.

Other NCH Speaking Events:

Aug. 27th & 28th Rural Homelessness Conference, Batesville, Arkansas

NCH Announcements

- **NCH is Hiring!** NCH is looking for a Director of Development. To apply, send a cover letter, resume to:

Michael Stoops
Acting Executive Director
National Coalition for the Homeless
2201 P St NW
Washington, DC 20037
Ph: 202.462.4822 x19
Fax: 202.462.4823
Email: mstoops@nationalhomeless.org

- **Tobacco Cessation Efforts** In order to curtail the devastating impact that tobacco use has on the homeless community, the National Coalition for Homeless, in partnership with The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM) and The National Network on Tobacco Prevention and Poverty (NNTPP) are pleased to announce The National Survey on Tobacco Prevention at Homeless Service Agencies. The survey can be found NCH's website on the home page and under the "health care justice" section. Please take a moment to complete this survey if you work in an organization such as a shelter or soup kitchen that offers assistance to those experiencing homelessness. The results of this survey will help guide further research and funding to this issue. Thank you for you time!

- **Make A Donation!** Founded in 1982, NCH is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission. That mission, our common bond, is to end homelessness. NCH is committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness by involving people who have formerly or are currently experiencing homelessness in all of our work. A tax-deductible donation to NCH brings tangible results that help protect homeless people and promote social justice. Our work is innovative, cost-effective, and is creating a documented paradigm shift in how homeless people everywhere are viewed by society. A gift of \$75, \$100, \$150, \$250 or whatever you can afford will enable our critically needed work to go on. Giving to NCH has never been easier. Please log onto our secure website, www.nationalhomeless.org for additional information and to donate online.

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