

# NCH . NEWS . . .

NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS | 2201 P St NW | Washington, DC 20037  
 Phone: 202.462.4822 | Fax: 202.462.4823 | INFO@NATIONALHOMELESS.ORG | WWW.NATIONALHOMELESS.ORG

This is the April issue of NCH News.

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## Illinois Advocates Call for Affordable Housing

### Housing Action Illinois Press Release

February 28

Springfield—At the State Capitol yesterday a briefing book for state legislators was released calling for the inclusion of affordable housing funding in the state's capital budget.

Governor Blagojevich's \$25 billion capital budget proposal, released on February 20, includes a \$300 million "Illinois Community Assets Fund" for economic development activities, affordable housing and health care development for the life of the capital budget, generally three to five years.

"That is a big step in the right direction, but with so many families, communities and businesses suffering because of the lack of affordable housing, Illinois should be investing at least an additional \$100 million a year just for housing," said Adam Gross, Director of the Regional Housing Initiative for Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, one of the book's authors. "But we're encouraged that for the first time ever in Illinois affordable housing is in a proposed capital budget."

To support the need for including affordable housing in the capital budget, the briefing book notes that federal guidelines say that no one should spend more than 30% of their income on housing, but according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 1.5 million households in Illinois—roughly one in three—pay more than 30% of their income for housing and 722,000 households in Illinois—roughly one in six—pay more than 50% of their income for housing.

The briefing book also points out that the housing industry serves as a critical economic engine locally, statewide, and nationally. The authors cited data showing that each dollar spent on residential construction generates an additional \$1.27 in additional economic activity through the purchase of construction materials and other means. And new funding for housing construction and rehabilitation would bring back jobs in a sector that has been hard hit by the foreclosure crisis and the economic downturn.

"The foreclosure crisis has refocused attention on the importance of affordable housing in people's lives and to overall economic health," said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois, another of the book's authors. "The briefing book makes the case that if there had been a larger supply of affordable homes, people would not have needed the risky mortgages that they now

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struggle to repay."

The book's authors are encouraging Governor Blagojevich and members of the General Assembly to negotiate a capital budget in a good faith, including identifying a revenue source that does not further harm the state's long-term fiscal situation and does not unduly burden low-income households.

The briefing book also includes a summary of proposed and recently enacted affordable housing legislation.

The entire briefing book is available for download at <http://www.housingactionil.org/publications/2008HousingBriefingBook.pdf>.

**For more information, contact Bob Palmer, Policy Director, Housing Action Illinois at 312-282-3959.**

## NCH Welcomes Corey Yarbrough

NCH as recently joined by Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow Corey Yarbrough. During his six-month tenure with NCH, Corey will be helping NCH with our social justice projects, including civil rights awareness and voter registration.

Before coming to NCH, Corey spent six months as a researcher and community organizer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He attended James Madison University, where he participated in intercollegiate debate and earned his B.A. in Justice Studies.

"In the movement for social justice, I feel the homeless population is often ignored," Corey says. "Working here will allow me to learn more about a unique group, while bringing more attention to the platform."

## NCH on the Road

### Upcoming Faces of Homelessness Speaking Engagements

- 3/18 – University of South Dakota, NCH, 7:00 p.m.
- 3/19 – Youth Service Opportunities Project, 3:00 p.m.
- 3/19 – NYLC, 7:30 p.m.
- 3/24 – University of Mizzou, NCH, 6:30 p.m.
- 3/25 – WVU, NCH, 10:00 a.m.
- 3/25 – Drexel, United Methodist Church, 11:00 a.m.
- 3/25 – DePaul, Fr. McKenna Center, 6:00 p.m.
- 3/25 – Youth Service Opportunities Project, 8:00 p.m.
- 3/26 – Church of the Pilgrims, 4:30 p.m.
- 3/26 – NYLC, 7:30 p.m.
- 3/27 – UNC Chapel Hill, 7:00 p.m.
- 3/28 – Iona High School, 6:30 p.m.
- 3/28 – Religious Action Coalition, Sherton National, 9:00 p.m.
- 3/30 – Dinner Program, CC Presbyterian, 9:30 a.m.
- 3/30 – American University, Freedom Plaza, 2:00 p.m.
- 3/30 – PANIM, Greenbelt Marriott, 7:30 p.m.
- 3/30 – Raleigh High School, Church of the Pilgrims, 7:30 p.m.

## Out Now: 2007 Poverty Scorecard

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, a national advocacy group striving to improve the lives of people experience poverty, has released its 2007 Poverty Scorecard.

The Poverty Scorecard rates how each member of the U.S. Congress voted on key legislation dealing affecting America's poor. Among other findings, this year's Scorecard has revealed that those legislators from states with the highest rates of poverty are least likely to vote in favor of measures intended to reduce it.

The report can be read in full at <http://www.povertylaw.org/advocacy/publications/2007-scorecard>

## **NCH Mourns Passing of Eric Robinson**

Eric S. Robinson, Sr. (1954-2008), a member of the Speakers' Bureau of the National Coalition for the Homeless, died unexpectedly on February 23, 2008, at his home in Washington, DC. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family.

Eric was a valued member of the Bureau since September 2007, and once hosted students on NCH's Urban Plunge. We are glad to have known him.

Eric was looking positively toward the future, and liked to offer others a helping hand. He will be missed.

## **Universal Living Wage Update**

**By Richard Troxell**

Update:

- 1) Legislative status of the ULW
- 2) Letter to the Interagency Council on Homelessness
- 3) Tax Day April 15, 2008

### **Legislative Status of the ULW**

For the second time\* in our long journey to permanently fix the federal minimum wage and achieve a Universal Wage, a great legislative hero, Congresswoman Julia Carson (D-7th, IN) died before we could perfect legislative language on our bill. She was a great champion of the people and will be deeply missed. Our journey continues.

### **Letter to the Interagency Council on Homelessness**

House the Homeless, Inc. has again written to Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, promoting the ULW and calling for adjustments to the nations 10 year plans to end homelessness by including all persons affected by creating Livable Incomes for both those who can work and those who cannot work.

Click on the "What's New" button found at [www.UniversalLivingWage.org](http://www.UniversalLivingWage.org) to view to the letter.

### **Tax Day- Tuesday, April 15, 2008**

Twice a year, we conduct two national days of action to promote the Universal Living Wage. Bridge the Economic Gap Day in September and Tax Day in April on the 15th. We go to our local post offices across the nation and fly 4' by 10' banners that state "Reduce your Axes with a [www.UniversalLivingWage.org](http://www.UniversalLivingWage.org)" drawing people to our website where the names and contact information (and your website) of participating organization can be seen. We distribute flyers that promote the idea that if businesses paid fair, living wages we could reduce to some degree our dependence on food stamps, TANF, General Assistance, EITC, etc. saving tax payers million of dollars. We encourage your to promote your own local issues at these events! Last year we were again active in every state in the union along with 37 additional cities.

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