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HUNDREDS OF NEW YORKERS KICK OFF “ONE NEW YORK: FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS” CAMPAIGN TO STOP CITY BUDGET CUTS AIMED AT NYC’S MOST VULNERABLE

Coalition of More Than 50 Major City Organizations Announce Campaign Targeting Mayor and Council to Protect Vital Services and Balance the Budget by Raising Revenue

New York— Just two days after city agencies submitted plans for across-the-board budget cuts that will impact legal services, child welfare, the homeless, schools, people with AIDS, the elderly, and youth, a broad based coalition of almost 75 citywide social service providers, community organizations, unions and advocacy groups kicked off a campaign to urge Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council to protect poor and middle class New Yorkers from budget cuts to vital services and to close the gap, in part through progressive revenue enhancements.

More than 200 New Yorkers who depend on vital services from One New York Coalition members and would be negatively impacted by further budget cuts joined the rally.

“Every day when I visit the Hamilton-Madison House, I can see how the City’s budget cuts are affecting our Senior Center,” said David Yang, an 82-year old New Yorker who relies on City-funded senior services. “Before, my Center was able to serve many seniors, but now they have reduced the number of breakfasts. If I come in a little later, I am out of luck and hungry.”

On September 23rd, Mayor Bloomberg called on all City agencies across the board to cut their budgets by 2.5% this year and 5% next year. In the current year’s budget services for children and youth, the elderly, the homeless, people with AIDS and legal services were already cut. The 2.5 percent reduction will mean cuts of \$4 million to the Department for the Aging, \$6.2 million from the Department of Youth and Community Development, \$7.8 million from the Department of Homeless Services, \$10.3 million from the Health Department, and \$185 million for the Department of Education. Children services would face \$20 million in cuts, senior services \$4 million, and social services \$15 million.

"Poor New Yorkers cannot carry this crisis on their backs— and we will not stand by as we become a city where seniors go without meals, children have no safe place to play after school, and working parents cannot afford childcare. We can't just cut our way out of deficits this size—that is no way to protect our city's future," said Ocynthia Williams, a parent leader of the Coalition for Educational Justice.

While acknowledging the exigency of the fiscal crisis and the need for targeted reductions in spending, the recession will actually increase the needs of thousands of New Yorkers in need of food, shelter, eviction prevention, medical care, childcare and heating assistance.

“It is precisely at times like this, when people are losing their jobs and losing their homes, that the city needs to keep its commitment to working and vulnerable New Yorkers— our children, parents and neighbors of all ages. We are fighting for a budget that invests in people and supports services to keep our communities strong during these tough economic times,” said Nancy Wackstein, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses and Board Chair of the Human Services Council.

The coalition insisted that any budget be balanced on the principle of shared sacrifice – including raising revenue. Members called for preserving investments in communities and services that will stimulate the economy from the bottom up and preserve economic stability for the whole city. While the coalition has yet to endorse specific revenue proposals, they are saying that no revenue proposals should be taken off the table.

“There is no equity in cutting services for New York City’s most vulnerable families” said Gary Carter, the Executive Director of LSA Family Health Service. “We work with families in East Harlem who do not have access to public housing or public assistance. The depth of their poverty is unimaginable, and we *are* their only safety net. Cutting services would be devastating, especially for families with babies and toddlers. Ensuring the healthy development of children today has far reaching implications for tomorrow.” Randi Weingarten, President of the United Federation of Teachers, added, “The breadth and depth of this coalition speaks volumes about the importance of this cause. New Yorkers are beginning to struggle in ways not seen in generations, and we are committed to protecting the safety net services people depend on, particularly our most vulnerable citizens. Children and schools are a vital, but not exclusive, part of that equation. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the seventies.”

The coalition also announced a similar effort in Albany as Governor Paterson prepares to ask legislators to cut \$2 billion from the current FY 08-09 budget.

Some examples of services that have already been affected by City cuts include:

- Children services were cut by \$72 million in last year, reducing funding for pre Kindergarten, drop out prevention programs, and health clinics where poor children seek primary health care.
- Cuts to legal services have left New Yorkers needing legal help at risk, including: 500 disabled or HIV infected New Yorkers who will no get legal assistance this year; 137 families who will not have help getting through Family Court; and over 900 cases of people facing eviction.
- NYCHA has closed 19 Community Centers and reduced services to over 400,000 low-income housing residents. More cuts will threaten more community centers and the jobs of over 400 workers. The centers offer day care, youth programs, and support

for seniors. Cuts means youth on the streets without after school enrichment and seniors left vulnerable.

- Public health programs were already cut by \$24 million last year, increasing the disparity in health care across New York City, and reducing funding for training for nurses and dentists, mental health and substance abuse services, and for infant mortality reduction by \$1.3 million.

The One New York: Fighting for Fairness Coalition includes over 50 organizations and counting who advocate for and serve New Yorkers needing services such as: AIDS services, child care, child welfare, education, health care, homeless housing, housing, immigrant services, income support, legal services, people with disabilities, senior services, youth services and other vital areas services.

Coalition Members List, in Formation

Advocates for Children • Alliance for Quality Education • Asian American Federation • Black Equity Alliance • Campaign for Fiscal Equity • Center for the Independence of the Disabled, NY • Child Care Inc. • Citizen Action of NYC • Citizens Committee for Children of New York • Citywide Council on High Schools • Coalition for Asian American Children & Families • Coalition for A District Alternative • Coalition for the Homeless • Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies • College of Mount Saint Vincent- Institute for Immigrant Concerns • Commission for Public's Health System • COMMUNITY ACCESS • Community Board 7 • Community Voices Heard • Connecting to Advantages • Council of Senior Centers and Services • Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation • District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO • Education Voters of New York • Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies • Fiscal Policy Institute • Good Jobs New York • Greater Chinatown Community Association • Highbridge Community Life Center • Hispanic Federation • Hispanic Senior Action Counsel • HIV Law Project, Inc. • Homeless Services United • Human Services Council • Hunger Action Network of NYS • Institute for Community Living • Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, Inc. • Isabella Geriatric Center • Internationals Network • Korean American Family Service • Legal Services NYC • Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, Inc. • Medicare Rights Center • National Association of Social Workers, NYC Chapter • Neighborhood Family Services Coalition • New York AIDS Coalition • New York Immigration Coalition • NY ACORN • NY Jobs with Justice • NYC Coalition for Educational Justice • NYC Employment and Training Coalition • One Stop Senior Services • Pratt Center for Community Development • Professional Staff Congress-CUNY • Project FIND • Riverstone Senior Life Services • SEIU Local 32BJ • Strycker's Bay Neighborhood Council, Inc. • Stuyvesant PA Executive Board • Supportive Housing Network of New York • The Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York • The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, Inc. • The Development Corporation • The Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York • The International Center in New York • The Women's Housing and Economic • Time Out From Testing • UAW REGION 9A • UAW Local 2325 Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (AFL-CIO) • United Community Center, Inc. • United Federation of Teachers • United Neighborhood Houses • University Settlement House • Urban Justice Center • Village Care of New York • Violence Intervention Program • Welfare Rights Initiative • Working Families Party