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Bringing America Home

This is the July issue of NCH News.

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MD Hate Crimes Bill Passed



The National Coalition for the Homeless is pleased to announce that Governor O'Malley of Maryland signed SB 151 into law on May 7th. SB 151 will make Maryland the first state to add homeless people as a protected class to its hate crimes law.

From 1999-2007, there have been 774 documented acts of violence committed against homeless individuals in the United States, 217 of which have resulted in deaths. In Maryland, documented attacks on homeless people date back at least

to 1992, when a homeless Korean War veteran was killed in Annapolis after being soaked in urine, kicked down a ravine, and called a "worthless bum." In 2001, a group of young men from South Baltimore began beating and robbing homeless people, a spree which resulted in three deaths. On Valentine's Day in 2008, a homeless man was beaten to death while sleeping in an alley in Frederick.

These incidents demonstrate the dangerous reality of life without housing and the increasing

NEWSLETTER

disregard for people experiencing homelessness. This law magnifies the importance of protecting our most vulnerable neighbors. Adding homeless individuals to Maryland's hate crimes law sends a message that homeless individuals are not second-class citizens and deserve the same protections as historically targeted groups.

Father and Son: Generational Homelessness (WFHB Firehouse Broadcasting)

64-year-old Abraham Morales is a street musician. His son Josh is 22 years old and has spent much of his life not knowing where he will sleep or what he will eat. A cut in their federal assistance left them homeless, and father and son drifted from shelter to shelter across Indiana for more than a year and a half. While most kids his age were playing xbox or checking email, Josh had to worry about surviving the cold Indiana nights. Being homeless together has bonded them in a way that transcends typical father-son relationships. Hear their unique story in this feature report by news director Chad Carrothers, produced for the 2008 National Homelessness Marathon. Winner of the 2008 Award for Best Social Justice Reporting from the Indiana chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

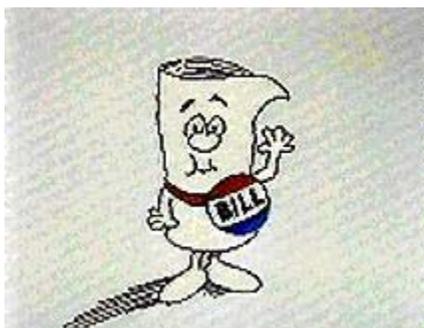
<http://www.wfhb.org/news/father-and-son-generational-homelessness>

Thank You from NCH

NCH would like to thank the following contributors for the month of April:

Allison Agro-Paulson
Jonathan and Susan Bell
Lois Ann Cross
Archibald Denny
Don DiSanti
Lisa Falcone
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Public Policy Update



HUD McKinney-Vento Reauthorization

Last week, the Senate voted to add an amendment to S. 896, the Helping Families Save their Homes Act, reauthorizing the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The amendment contains the text of the stand-alone bill S. 808/H.R. 1877, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act, similar to the HUD McKinney-Vento reauthorization that passed in the House last year. The bill will now move to the House of

Representatives for additional amendments, and will subsequently be returned to the Senate for a final vote.

NCH recognizes that reauthorization of these critical programs is important and long-overdue, and commends Senators for their hard work. However, NCH continues to have a number of outstanding concerns about the legislation that Congress has failed to address. Among our concerns are:

- **Ineligible People**—The definition of “homeless individual” given in the amendment, though lengthy and burdensome for service providers who would have to adhere to it, fails to include all individuals generally recognized as homeless, including many in shared housing or motels and many vulnerable children and youth.
- **Weakens Community Decision-Making**—The amendment fails to assign a role to homeless people or service providers as formal decision-makers in a geographic area’s collaborative application for funding.
- **Restrictions on Eligible Activities**—The bills would put into the force of law restrictions on a community’s use of funds, and add would add some new restrictions as well. This will further reduce geographic areas’ flexibility to respond to homelessness the way it makes most sense.
- **Privacy Concerns**—The bills authorize a data collection and reporting system on clients of McKinney-Vento-funded projects, but do not ensure client privacy and safety of their data.

If the HUD McKinney-Vento reauthorization legislation passes Congress and is signed into law, NCH will continue to work with the Administration to implement these programs in a way that serves as many homeless populations as possible, protects the privacy of the people the programs assist, and allows for flexibility in use of funds on the local level.

Tenant Protections

NCH and others are hopeful that a key measure protecting low-income renters from becoming homeless due to foreclosure will soon be passed by Congress and signed into law. Last week, the Senate voted in favor of an amendment to S. 896, the Helping Families Save their Homes Act, that would provide tenants whose landlords have lost their properties to foreclosure the right to remain in their homes through the term of their lease, or, if they do not have a lease, for at least 90 days. The amendment also provides similar protections for holders of Housing Choice Vouchers. The Act will now move to the House of Representatives for amendments, and will subsequently be returned to the Senate for a final vote. NCH applauds Senators who voted in favor of this amendment for taking an important step toward protecting some of the most vulnerable and innocent victims of the foreclosure crisis.

Interagency Council on Homelessness

NCH is pleased to support the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) Reform Act of 2009, H.R. 2141, recently introduced by Representative Steve Cohen (D-TN). This bill would make a number of positive additions to the membership and duties of the ICH. Included among these duties are the development of a regularly-updated national plan to end homelessness and the development of constructive alternatives to laws and policies that discriminate against people experiencing homelessness. The bill would also subject the nominee for the position of ICH Executive Director to Senate confirmation, an important opportunity for public input into the nomination process. NCH thanks Rep. Cohen for introducing this bill, and looks forward to working with his office and with other advocates to see it through to enactment.

NCH Meetings with Obama Administration

Several members of the NCH public policy staff and Board of Directors met with key members of the Obama Administration in late April. On April 21, we met with HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan in his office to discuss NCH’s housing and homeless assistance priorities for the

current term of office. Meeting attendees from NCH were impressed by the Secretary's willingness to meet beyond the allotted time, and were greatly encouraged by his commitment to providing safe and decent housing that is affordable even to the lowest-income Americans. One day earlier, NCH Board members met with a representative of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss NCH's ideas and proposals for improving homeless persons' access to workforce services and ensuring that every American has a livable income sufficient to afford housing and other life necessities. NCH thanks both of these members of the Administration for meeting with us, and looks forward to working in partnership with HUD and the Department of Labor in the coming years.

Homeless Hate Crimes Legislation

The House of Representatives recently voted to pass the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, H.R. 1913, by a vote of 249-175. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) attempted to offer an amendment to the bill adding people experiencing homelessness as a protected class under existing federal hate crimes statute, but the amendment was not ruled in order. NCH thanks Rep. Johnson for this effort, and looks forward to her forthcoming introduction of stand-alone Homeless Hate Crimes legislation. NCH will continue to seek a champion on the Senate side who is willing to take this step to protect people experiencing homelessness from hate-motivated violence.

Fiscal Year 2010 Budget

The Obama Administration released its detailed budget request for fiscal year 2010 on May 7. Included in the request was \$1 billion in dedicated, non-discretionary funds for the National Housing Trust Fund, and \$17.8 billion for housing choice vouchers—a level high enough to fund the maximum number of vouchers in use at the end of 2008. No funds were requested for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which received \$100 million in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Also included were the following requests for targeted homeless assistance programs, which do not include funds allotted to these programs through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009:

- \$1.8 billion in Homeless Assistance Grants;
- \$3.4 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;
- \$115 million for the Runaway and Homeless Youth programs;
- \$68 million for the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program;
- \$35 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program;
- \$65 million for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth program;
- \$144 million for the Homeless Grant and Per Diem program.

NCH is Hiring: Executive Director Position Open

Position Summary: The Executive Director of NCH is responsible for providing leadership, management of the coalition and carrying out the policies, programs and public policy initiatives established by the board of directors. This position is full-time and is based in our Washington, DC national headquarters. Some travel is required.

Duties:

1. Implement and monitor the Strategic Plan and Vision of the board including new and established programs, including development and monitoring of annual work plan.
2. Oversee NCH fund development efforts, and participate in development activities, including preparing grant proposals and maintaining relations with both funders and potential ones.
3. Oversee day-to-day operations of the office and coordination of board operations.
4. Supervise staff and volunteers.

5. Function as the principal spokesperson in dealing with public officials and the media.
6. Prepare annual budget in conjunction with the board executive committee.
7. Represent NCH to other local and national advocacy groups.
8. Coordinate public policy initiatives, community organizing and public education.
9. Oversee annual audit process in conjunction with board Treasurer.
10. Ensure compliance with governmental requirements of non-profit corporation.
11. Ensure compliance with grant and funding requirements.

Demonstrated Skills and Abilities:

1. Excellent leadership skills.
2. Experience supervising a staff, recruiting employees, evaluating work and maintaining a high level of staff retention.
3. Experience implemented a team management approach.
4. Ability and experience communicating effectively with the media in previous work.
5. Experience managing a grassroots local, state or national organization involved with advocacy on housing, homeless or human rights issues.
6. Demonstrated experience raising funds for a \$500,000 to \$750,000 non-profit organization from diverse private and public funding sources.
7. Successfully demonstrated sound fiscal management.
8. Experience implementing and monitoring a successful strategic planning effort.
9. Ability and experience working successfully with a diverse volunteer board of directors.
10. Detail-oriented, ability to delegate, good follow-through, and ability to hold people accountable.
11. Experience working with diverse organizations using a variety of organizing strategies.

Qualifications:

1. At least three to five years in a position of similar experience at a grassroots local, state or national advocacy organization.
2. Candidate with national policy or organizing experience preferred.
3. Extensive working knowledge of homelessness and housing issues.
4. Proven ability working with a diverse board and staff.
5. Demonstrated commitment to open communication and team work.
6. Demonstrated commitment to social justice.

Hiring Process:

NCH is an equal opportunity employer. People who are homeless and/or formerly homeless are encouraged to apply.

Applications must be received by June 15, 2009. Applications should include a letter of interest with salary requirements and resume, and be mailed/faxed/emailed to:

National Coalition for the Homeless
Attn: NCH E.D. Search Committee
2201 P St., NW, Washington, DC 20037-1003.
Fax: (202) 462-4823
Email: info@nationalhomeless.org

Salary range and benefits are comparable with other national homeless and housing advocacy organizations.

Applicant must be available for a face-to-face interview in Washington, DC at a date to be determined in July 2009. NCH will pay reasonable travel expenses for out-of-state applicants.

**NCH on the Road: Where to Catch Our Faces of Homelessness
Speakers' Bureau**

All events in Washington, DC unless otherwise noted.

May 15th Bank-Fund Staff Federal Credit Union, 12:30pm
 May 15th Youth Service Opportunities Project, 3pm
 May 16th Pilgrimage-Laurel Presbyterian Church, 7pm
 May 16th Steinbruck Center, 7:30pm
 May 19th Close Up Foundation, 1:30pm
 May 19th YSOP, 2:45pm
 May 21st Pilgrimage Grove Presbyterian Church, 7pm
 May 24th USY Spring Convention in Camp Louise in Cascade, MD, 10:30am
 May 26th YSOP, 3pm
 May 27th United Methodist Church
 June 1st Broadneck High School in Annapolis, MD, 12:25pm
 June 2nd Broadneck High School in Annapolis, MD, 12:25pm
 June 5th Cesar Chavez Public Charter School, 9:30am

Should We Be Talking About Living Wages Now? (Jeannette Wicks-Lim, Dollars & Sense)

The Department of Labor announced in January that the U.S. economy shed 2.8 million jobs in 2008, bringing the national unemployment rate to 7.2%—its highest level in 16 years. In today's economic climate, the worst since the Great Depression, are the raises demanded by living-wage campaigns a luxury? Should living-wage campaigns take a back seat to pulling the economy out of recession?



For many, the answer is no. Campaigns across the country continue to build on the widespread success of a movement that has put into place more than 140 living-wage laws since the mid-1990s. Take the Hartford Living Wage Task Force in Connecticut, which is trying to expand the number of workers guaranteed a living wage under its original 1997 law. Or Santa Fe's Living Wage Network, which fought for, and won, a cost-of-living increase to its living wage rate for 2009. Or the Nashville Movement in Tennessee, a group laying the groundwork for a campaign to establish a brand new ordinance.

They are right. Today's economic turmoil challenges us to create practical policies to meet the heightened imperative of living wages, not to abandon them.

[Read more here.](#)

NYC's Public Shelters Charging Rent (Julie Bosman and Andy Newman, New York Times)

The Bloomberg administration has quietly begun charging rent to homeless families who live in publicly run shelters but have income from jobs.

The new policy is based on a 1997 state law that was not enforced until last week, when shelter operators across the city began requiring residents to pay a certain portion of their income. The amount varies based on factors that include family size and what shelter is being

used, but should not exceed 50 percent of a family's income, a state official said.

Vanessa Dacosta, who earns \$8.40 an hour as a cashier at Sbarro, received a notice under her door several weeks ago informing her that she had to give \$336 of her approximately \$800 per month in wages to the Clinton Family Inn, a shelter in Hell's Kitchen where she has lived since March.

"It's not right," said Ms. Dacosta, a single mother of a 2-year-old who said she spends nearly \$100 a week on child care. "I pay my baby sitter, I buy diapers, and I'm trying to save money so I can get out of here. I don't want to be in the shelter forever."

[Read more here.](#)

Correction

Last month's issue of NCH News mistakenly reported that a Senator Harry Reed was honored at the recent National Low Income Housing Coalition conference. In fact, the Senator who was honored was Jack Reed, for his work on the National Housing Trust Fund. We apologize for this error.

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