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See Media Contacts Below

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez Stood Alongside Nonprofits In Opposition To President Trump And Congressional Republicans' Harmful Cuts To The Social Safety Net

Group calls on Congress to reject a Farm Bill that takes food off the tables of needy Americans when they return from recess

(New York, NY) – On April 30, 2018, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez stood alongside nonprofit service providers on the Steps of City Hall to call on Congress to reject disastrous cuts to food stamps, Medicaid, housing, and other social programs that strengthen the economy, improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers, and demonstrate how we as a city value opportunity and dignity.

The press conference was organized by a state-based coalition, including FPWA, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York, Fiscal Policy Institute, Human Services Council of New York, United Neighborhood Houses, UJA-Federation of New York, Center for New York City Affairs, the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, The New York Immigration Coalition, Food Bank for New York City, The Met Council, The New York Housing Conference, The Center for Independence of the Disabled, Metro NY Health Care for All, and more.

The coalition submitted a letter on behalf of 63 organizations and service providers (see list below) asking members of Congress to fully fund these programs and defend them from budget cuts. The full text of the letter is [available here](#).

Press Quotes:

“The Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans are waging a brazen and heartless attack on low-income families, working New Yorkers, children and other vulnerable neighbors. After passing a tax cut benefiting billionaires and big corporations, they are now seeking to hollow out Medicare, cut food stamps, and triple the rent on low-income tenants who receive federal assistance. These proposals are an affront to our national conscience and I will be joining arm-in-arm with my fellow Democrats in Congress to stop them dead in their tracks,” said **Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez (D-Brooklyn)**.

“The federal budget is a reflection of our values and priorities and it would be irresponsible and disastrous for Congress to implement budget cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, Social Security, and other social and safety net programs. As a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am committed to fighting for these essential programs to ensure our neediest communities have the resources they need,” said **Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing)**.

“The newly proposed regulations and cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, and other crucial social safety net programs is a blatant and cruel attack on hard working American families, children, the elderly,



and people with disabilities. These programs are crucial to those who are trying to maintain a decent quality of life and provide for their families, despite impoverished circumstances. In 2017, the SNAP program delivered close to \$64 billion in much needed economic benefits to Americans across this nation. It has helped families avoid food insecurity by giving them access to healthy food options each month while contributing to the economy and job creation in our communities. I will not support these unwarranted cuts and such callous, mean spirited legislation that attacks the most vulnerable among us," said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (D-Crown Heights, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Flatbush, East Flatbush, Ditmas Park, Park Slope, Midwood, Sheepshead Bay, Brownsville).**

"Too many in Congress are still fixated on slashing the safety net, and predictably cite the soaring federal deficit exacerbated by the outlandish \$1.4 trillion in tax cuts as they seek to make deep cuts to services that support low- and middle-income families, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Stopping the Farm Bill is the most important thing we can do right now in stopping the Trump administration from dismantling the safety net through "welfare reform," code words for cutting SNAP, housing, Medicaid, and other critical programs," said **Jennifer Jones Austin, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, FPWA.**

"More than 750,000 New Yorkers depend on settlement houses for access to essential services ranging from early childhood education, to workforce development, to housing assistance, to home delivered meals for seniors," said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses.** "Misguided efforts by Members of Congress continue to use these services as bargaining chips in the federal budget discussion - when in fact cuts to the safety net would jeopardize the wellbeing of children, families and adults across the country. The irony is that Medicaid, stable housing, food and other critical programs actually strengthen neighborhoods and the economy by improving opportunity for all. We call on Congress to fully fund safety net programs and defend them from budget cuts, ensuring all people in our country have access to the services they need to live healthy and productive lives."

"Congress seems poised to impose significant cuts and stricter work and training requirements on low-income families across the country that rely on SNAP (Food Stamps). With nearly 15 percent of the state's population, and over one million children relying on SNAP benefits to make ends meet, we need the New York Congressional delegation to stand up against these harmful cuts. Nearly half of all SNAP recipients are in families with members who are elderly or disabled and nearly half a million are working and still qualifying for benefits," said **Ron Deutsch, Executive Director, Fiscal Policy Institute.** "Proponents of more stringent work requirements fail to realize that many recipients are already working and many want to work but face significant challenges to joining the labor force. For these people, adding requirements without removing barriers may do more harm than good."

"New York City human services providers improve the physical, emotional, and economic health and well-being of over 2.5 million New Yorkers every year and know how real the challenges are for families across our State. The proposed cuts to essential programs like SNAP, housing, and Medicaid undermine their road to economic prosperity. New York's



representatives have an obligation to protect the well-being of these New Yorkers by ensuring these proven programs remain in place,” said **Michelle Jackson, Deputy Director, Human Services Council.**

"Trump's 'public charge' proposal doesn't make America great - it just makes it poorer. The President would inflict widespread suffering by forcing immigrant families to make an impossible choice between legal status, and the safety and well-being of their loved ones. Under this proposed new rule, children would lose their health insurance, immigrant families would struggle to keep a roof over their heads, and infants would go hungry. Our federal budget should cut pork from somewhere else— not steal food away from our tables," said **Steven Choi, Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition.**

“As an organization that overwhelmingly serves residents of public housing in Western Queens, we at Riis Settlement are horrified by the proposed cuts in SNAP, Medicaid and other vital benefits for low-income and working class New Yorkers. Our communities cannot shoulder any more of the burden of tax cuts for the rich and for large corporations and it’s time to say enough is enough,” said **Christopher Hanway, Executive Director, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement.**

“Instead of investing in HUD programs that are effective in preventing homelessness, building communities and providing needed affordable housing, President Trump proposes to slash the HUD budget and raise rents for families struggling to afford basic needs. In the face of a growing affordable housing crisis, now is the time to preserve public housing and build new affordable housing in New York and across the country,” said **Rachel Fee, Executive Director, New York Housing Conference.**

“The budget issue is a moral issue, and this budget is part of Congress’ attempt to transfer our tax dollars from the poor to the rich,” said **Jonathan Soto, Associate VP of Strategic Initiatives, Union Theological Seminary.** “Our faith traditions call us to serve our neighbors and stand against injustice. Union stands with NYC’s service provider community to let Washington know that the time to turn the budget from an immoral to a moral one is now.”

“The federal government proposals to cut SNAP, Medicaid and other public benefits, in addition to proposed regulations that foster fear, represent a blatant attack on people of color, immigrants, and low-income New Yorkers,” said **Wayne Ho, President & CEO, Chinese-American Planning Council.** “In New York City, one out of every four Asian American struggles with poverty. Many of our community members rely on these public programs to make ends meet, and we should be expanding access instead of restricting it.”

“SNAP is a lifeline that enables 1.6 million New York City residents put needed food on the table. With its drastic cuts to SNAP, the House Agriculture Committee’s Farm Bill takes an axe to a resource that children, veterans, seniors and working families rely on. As one of the nation’s largest food banks, we understand that ending hunger is a shared responsibility that charity cannot shoulder alone. SNAP provides more meals in New York City in two months than the



entire network of food pantries and soup kitchens does in a year,” said **Triada Stampas, Vice President for Research & Public Affairs, Food Bank For New York City**. “Measures such as those proposed in this Farm Bill would only increase our city’s Meal Gap and place an unbearable strain on families, food pantries and soup kitchens already struggling with food shortages. We stand with social service providers from across New York to reject the notion that the Federal Budget can be fixed on the backs of those with the least.”

“At Safe Horizon, we see how public benefits can help provide stability and a path to safety for victims of violence and abuse,” said **Liz Roberts, Deputy CEO, Safe Horizon**. “For a domestic violence survivor fleeing her abuser, public assistance through TANF can serve as a temporary but essential bridge while she enters shelter and looks for work and safe housing. For a homeless young person living on the streets, SNAP can provide access to healthy food that doesn’t require an exploitative exchange for sex. For a sexual assault survivor grappling with the effects of PTSD, Medicaid can provide a bridge to trauma-informed mental health treatment and recovery. These and other public benefits are essential for victims of violence and abuse across New York City and the country, and imposing greater work requirements and sanctions on these programs will only create more barriers for victims as they try to heal and rebuild their lives. We urge the White House and Congress to strengthen these programs rather than undermine their effectiveness.”

“The federal proposals to cut SNAP, Medicaid and other critical public benefits would only serve to exacerbate hunger and poverty. The impact on the working poor, children and seniors would be devastating, effectively obliterating any opportunities for families to escape cyclical poverty and become self-sufficient. The proposed \$213 billion dollar cuts to SNAP alone have a ripple effect that extends far beyond a food budget. Studies show that families put off rent, utility costs and medical expenses in order to afford food. As one of the largest Jewish social safety net programs in the U.S., Met Council is acutely

aware that charity alone cannot remedy these cuts. We ask the New York Congressional delegation to fight against these devastating cuts,” said **Jessica Hughson-Andrade, Director Benefits Access, Met Council**.

“The proposed federal regulations and budget cuts to essential programs like SNAP, affordable housing, and Medicaid undermine the path to self-sufficiency of the over 2,000 homeless New Yorkers that we serve each year. This, among other things, jeopardizes their housing stability as well as compromises their already often fragile, mental and physical health. It also is cost-ineffective, increasing the usage of costly emergency rooms and homeless shelters. We look to Congress to execute its power to provide for the general welfare of the United States and reject the Administration’s efforts to erode the diminishing safety net,” said **Frederick Shack, CEO, Urban Pathways, Inc.**

“52% of households using SNAP to meet their food needs have a disabled household member,” said **Paula Wolff Senior Benefits Counselor at Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York**. “Many households could lose their benefits because they didn’t meet the criteria for



limited exemptions, didn't understand that they qualify for an exemption, struggled to provide the documentation to prove they qualify — or caseworkers either didn't process the materials on time or made mistakes in assessing recipients' circumstances.”

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List of Organizations Supporting Signatories

The Children's Village

University Settlement

Sunnyside Community Services

Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement

GOSO

The Alliance for Positive Change

LEHSRC

GRAHAM WINDHAM

Park Avenue Christian Church (DoC)/ UCC

Brooklyn Kindergarten Society

Partnership with Children

East Harlem Block Nursery, Inc.

Mohawk Valley CAA

New York Democratic County Committee

Schenectady Community Action Program, Inc.

Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition

New York State Assembly



NYS Assembly
Community Resource Exchange (CRE)
SCO Family of Services
HCCI
Chinese American Planning Council, Inc
Heights and Hills
Citizen Action of New York
ROCitizen
New York Association on Independent Living
ATLI- Action Together Long Island
NYSCAA
New York Immigration Coalition
Catholic Charities of Chemung & Schuyler Counties
CDRC
Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS
Catholic Charities
Professional Staff Congress
Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler
Family Reading Partnership of Chemung Valley
New York State Network for Youth Success
NAMI
Albany County Central Federation of Labor
Food & Water Watch
Jewish Family Service
Metro New York Health Care for All
Alliance for Positive Change
MercyFirst
Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York, Queens (CIDNY)
SiCM - Schenectady Community Ministries
Coalition for the Homeless
CIDNY
Citizen Action of NY
PEF Retiree
Urban Pathways, Inc
Community Food Advocates
PSC/CUNY AFT Local 2334
New York StateWide Senior Action Council
Early Care & Learning Council
Urban Pathways
African Services Committee
Day Care Council of New York
New York State Community Action Association
Supportive Housing Network of New York, Inc
The Radical Age Movement



United Neighborhood Houses

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