

## The NPACH Report, Vol. 1 No. 6

Welcome to The NPACH Report, the newsletter of the National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness. This month, NPACH brings you information on important developments regarding the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the House version of the HUD appropriations bill.

We'd like to call your attention to NPACH En Español—linked from the front of our website are Spanish translations of our mission statement and our 2004 Legislative and Policy Agenda. As part of our commitment to grass roots organizing, NPACH is dedicated to engaging voices from every community affected by homelessness. We are working on additional translations of our written materials.

We've also added an archive of our news articles, sorted by topic to make searching easier.

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[http://npach.org/mailman/listinfo/npachreport\\_npach.org](http://npach.org/mailman/listinfo/npachreport_npach.org)

### **NPACH News**

#### **National Housing Trust Fund Bill: Discharge Petition Filed**

In an important step for the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign, three cosponsors of National Affordable Housing Trust Fund legislation have filed a motion for a discharge petition in an attempt to move the bill, H.R. 1102, to the floor of the House for debate and an up-or-down vote.

Although the House version of the National Housing Trust Fund legislation now has an impressive 214 cosponsors, the leadership of the Financial Services Committee has not taken up the bill. Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA), Michael Capuano (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) filed the motion in an effort to move the National Housing Trust Fund forward. Learn more about the discharge petition and what you can do to help:  
[http://www.npach.org/nhtf\\_al.htm](http://www.npach.org/nhtf_al.htm)

#### **National Groups and Members of Congress Raise Questions about the Samaritan Initiative**

On July 13, 2004, the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity of the House Financial Services Committee held a hearing on the Samaritan Initiative Act (H.R. 4057). The legislation, introduced by Congressman Rick Renzi (R-1<sup>st</sup>/AZ), helps form the centerpiece of the Bush Administration's "chronic" homeless initiative by combining \$70 million in funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Veteran Affairs (VA) to provide supportive housing and services for those who meet the definition of "chronically homeless." Introduced on March 30, 2004, the Samaritan has 26 co-sponsors.

The vast majority of panelists and Representatives who attended the hearing supported expanding the definition of homelessness under the proposed legislation. Testifying on behalf of Catholic Charities, Lutheran Services of America, and Volunteers of America, Jim Mauck, President and CEO of Catholic Charities of the archdiocese of Denver, recommended the inclusion of families. Mauck asserted that "the Samaritan initiative relies on a definition of a 'chronically' homeless person that categorically rejects families with children, even families with disabled members who have suffered often repeated and extended periods of homelessness. This critical exclusion, combined with policies being advanced by HUD, will hinder the efforts of homeless service providers to assist many homeless families with children in their struggle to achieve stability." In its written testimony, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Services, and Volunteers of America further recommended the adoption of the Department of Education definition of homelessness for subsequent legislation to "capture the reality experienced by many homeless families."  
[http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/news/testimony/content\\_displays.cfm?fuseaction=display\\_document&id=468&location=7](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/news/testimony/content_displays.cfm?fuseaction=display_document&id=468&location=7)

Representative Arthur Davis (D-7<sup>th</sup>/Alabama), received unanimous affirmation from the national advocates panel as to whether the committee should seek an expanded definition of homelessness, and Samaritan author and original sponsor Rick Renzi offered that he too was “open to an amendment on the definition of homelessness.” Renzi declared himself “willing to work [with Members] during the markup period at looking at what an amendment might be on the definition, particularly given all the testimony we have gotten here today.”

Despite strong support among Members and national groups for an expanded definition of homelessness in the Samaritan Act, Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) Director Philip Mangano resisted the idea, observing “I think other initiatives are being fostered to address concerns of other profiles of homeless people.”

Throughout the hearing, several Members and panelists cited the need to substantially increase funding of existing housing and homelessness programs, and for Congressional support of legislative vehicles such as the Bringing America Home Act (H.R. 2897, with 56 co-sponsors) and the National Housing Trust Fund Act (H.R. 1102, with 214 co-sponsors), initiatives that forward a comprehensive national anti-homelessness agenda. The strongest concern raised at the hearing, however, was the Administration’s proposed cuts to the Section 8 program. Members questioned the apparent trade-offs and seeming contradictions between the \$70 million proposed under the Samaritan Act, and the \$1.6 billion cut to the Section 8 program contained within the President’s 2005 budget. Congressman Barney Frank (D-4<sup>th</sup>/MA) challenged Bush Administration witness ICH Executive Director Philip Mangano to explain how the Administration reconciled the proposed cuts with its stated goal of “ending ‘chronic’ homelessness” within ten years.

(For a transcript of this exchange, please see <http://www.npach.org/SamaritanTestimony.pdf> )

Congressman Bernie Sanders (I-At Large/Vermont) summarized the policy contradictions with the following observation: “Mr. Chairman, let us not delude ourselves: \$70 million within the context of the problem of homelessness and affordable housing in this country is not a real solution to the affordable housing crisis that our country is experiencing. And I might add, at the same time that the administration is supporting a new \$70 million program to combat homelessness, it is also lobbying Congress for a \$1.6 billion cut in the nation's most important affordable housing program in this country, the section 8 rental assistance program.”

### **HUD Appropriations Update**

The House version of the HUD appropriations bill brought some good news to those concerned about the proposed cuts to the Section 8 program. On July 22, the House VA-HUD appropriations committee forwarded a bill that funds the program at near the level advocates have argued is necessary to maintain existing vouchers. Now the bad news: in order to fund Section 8, lawmakers chose to cut virtually every other housing program in HUD’s portfolio, rather than seek additional resources. McKinney-Vento homeless assistance grants were slashed by \$54 million; the HOME program by \$86 million; housing for persons with AIDS by close to \$13 million; housing for persons with disabilities by \$11 million; housing for the elderly by over \$32 million; public housing operating fund by \$153 million; fair housing programs by almost \$2 million; and community development block grants by over \$200 million. The Senate will mark up its version of the bill in September, following the August recess.

[http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease\\_id=416](http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=416)

### **Child Nutrition Act Reauthorized**

On June 30, 2004, President Bush signed Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Section 107 provides for the categorical eligibility of homeless children and youth for free school meals. Previously, this policy was an administrative decision; it is now supported by the law. Categorical eligibility also has been extended to migrant children, and to youth served by Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.

In addition to the changes in free meal eligibility, the reauthorized law amends the Child and Adult Care Food Program by extending eligibility for snacks and meals for children in homeless and domestic violence shelters up to the age of 18 (the current age limit is 12).

Information about the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 may be found on the USDA web site at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/policy/Reauthorization\\_%20memos\\_04/Reauthorization\\_2004.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/policy/Reauthorization_%20memos_04/Reauthorization_2004.htm)

### **Thailand Develops Housing Initiative**

The Government of Thailand has undertaken to provide and facilitate housing delivery for one million households in five years, through two distinct programs. Firstly, through the Baan Ua Arthorn (We Care) program, the National Housing Authority will act as developer of subsidized houses and flats for those able to afford the monthly payment; and, secondly, the Baan Mankong (Secure Housing) program will channel infrastructure subsidies and soft housing loans directly to poor communities for a variety of upgrading activities.

The strategy underlying the unconventional and innovative Baan Mankong program is having communities, and community networks, be the key actors in forging solutions to the housing problems in Thai cities. The program enables poor communities to study the physical problems in their settlements, develop their own plans for resolving those problems and then implement those plans themselves, collectively, using infrastructure subsidies and low-income housing loans which they manage themselves.

[www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org)

### **Notes from the Field**

#### **Florida Advocates Seek 30-30 Vision:**

In Florida and throughout the nation, the bulk of the individuals and families experiencing the affordable housing crisis are renters with incomes at or below 30% of Area Median Income. These include persons with disabilities, single parent families with children, and persons at-risk of homelessness. As we continue to work to preserve Section 8 vouchers and enact the National Housing Trust Fund, we must also look at what other rental production programs are doing (or not doing) to address the greatest housing needs. For example, Congress recently approved a 40% increase in the per capita allocation of low-income housing tax credits to states, but the production of units for poor households did not increase in Florida at all.

The 30-30 Vision Campaign, launched jointly by the Florida Coalition for the Homeless and the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition, asks that at least 30% of rental units produced by State-funded or State-administered programs be affordable to households at or below 30% AMI. Service providers, advocates and consumers are speaking out in an effort to change policies that have been unilaterally set, up until now, by the for-profit housing developers who stand to benefit financially from the decisions about how public subsidy is used.

<http://www.npach.org/housingvision.pdf>

<http://www.3030vision.org>

<http://www.flacoalitionhomeless.com>

#### **Coalition on Homelessness San Francisco Releases “Hidden Voices” Report**

“This report establishes homeless families and immigrants as an integral part of the over-all homelessness crisis in America and argues for the inclusion of families and immigrants in any strategy to reduce or end homelessness. Today, 14.4 million American families - one out of every seven families – have critical housing needs. Despite all of the talk of family values in America, we have utterly failed as a society to value our families. We have failed to create the necessary affordable housing, decent and accessible jobs, income safety net, childcare, and health care that will allow all families in this country to thrive. Despite the severe needs of America’s low-income families and children, the last twenty years have witnessed massive cutbacks in programs that benefit them.”

[http://www.npach.org/hidden\\_voices\\_report.pdf](http://www.npach.org/hidden_voices_report.pdf)

### **NPACH People & Events**

#### **NPACH at the Boston Social Forum**

NPACH staff attended the Boston Social Forum, held July 23-25 at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Executive Director Dr. Brad Paul led a workshop entitled “Housing as a Right.”

<http://www.bostonsocialforum.org>

### **Successful Fundraiser held in Boston**

NPACH would like to thank everyone who attended the benefit show at Great Scott on July 23. Special thanks go out to the staff and owners of Great Scott; Carl Lavin, who organized and promoted the show; and most of all to the great bands who lent their talents to the cause of ending homelessness. We encourage you to give them your support and check them out when you have the chance!

The Halogens <http://www.thehalogens.com>

The Autumn Rhythm <http://www.theautumnrhythm.com>

Stereo Soul Future <http://www.stereosoulfuture.com>

### **NPACH-SRO**

NPACH's Southern Regional Office (NPACH-SRO) continues to work with communities across the South. On July 6, Brad Paul visited Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to tour 1-2-1 Haven House, a group home which offers housing to persons living with HIV/AIDS. NPACH-SRO's visit has helped bring positive media attention to 1-2-1 Haven House, which in turn has resulted in an opportunity for additional funding to serve a larger number of people.

<http://www.npach.org/hattiesb.htm>

### **News from our Partners**

The Community Action Partnership and its national network of Community Action Agencies is hosting the "No Room for Poverty" National Rally. The rally will be held on September 4, 2004, from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on the Ellipse in Washington, DC (the Ellipse is between the White House and the Washington Monument). The rally is being held to raise the visibility of poverty in America and to call for a White House Conference on American Poverty to address the issue. The event is free and open to the general public. NPACH has joined with the Community Action Partnership and dozens of other organizations in sponsoring the event. NPACH Executive Director Brad Paul will be speaking at the rally. CAP President Derrick Span's commentary on the need for this rally is available online.

[http://www.npach.org/d\\_span.htm](http://www.npach.org/d_span.htm)

<http://www.povertyrally.org/>

### **Barcelona to host the World Urban Forum**

The Spanish Mediterranean port city of Barcelona is preparing to receive some 2,000 to 3,000 delegates representing governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other experts on urban issues from around the world for the second gathering of UN-HABITAT's World Urban Forum 13-17 September 2004.

<http://www.unchs.org/wuf/2004/default.asp>

The Mental Health Association in Tulsa will hold its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Zarrow Mental Health Symposium, September 29-October 1. The Zarrow Mental Health Symposium is an annual conference designed to provide state-of-the-art research and practical information about current issues related to mental health and mental illness. In recognition of the Zarrow Mental Health Symposium celebrating its 10th year, the conference will be national in scope and will address the critical issues of housing and community supports for people with mental illness.

<http://www.mhat.org/zarrow/overview.htm>

The American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty presents the National Conference on Homeless Courts. The conference will be held on Friday, October 8, 2004 at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego, 5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA 92110. More information and online registration can be found at:

<http://www.abanet.org/homeless/homelesscourtconference.html>

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) will hold their 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota October 16-19. The conference is open to all who care about ensuring school academic achievement and the overall success for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent, and adequate housing. Conference information and registration materials may be found at: <http://www.naehcy.org/2004registration.html>

**Support NPACH**

NPACH needs your support! If you'd like to contribute to our efforts, please contact Rob Wilbanks, by e-mail at [rwilbanks@npach.org](mailto:rwilbanks@npach.org), or by telephone at (202) 835-3054.