

The NPACH Report *vol. 3 no. 7*

The Newsletter of The National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness

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Making McKinney-Vento Work for All Homeless Persons

New paper outlines principles for McKinney-Vento Program policy and reauthorization. Sign on today!

Over the past few years, HUD's design of the annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) has increasingly undermined local control and effectively legislated through the rule-making process. Unable to successfully move the Samaritan Initiative through the 108th Congress, the Administration, via HUD and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), has now aggressively moved to impose the emphasis on "ending chronic homelessness" on localities, rather than allow communities to determine their own priorities based on actual need. Two current pieces of McKinney-Vento reauthorization legislation- S. 1801 and H.R. 5041- propose to write much of this current policy into statute.

Numerous national, state, and local organizations have joined together to issue the following set of principles that we believe must form the basis of any reauthorization measure. Included in this coalition are faith-based and community-based human needs organizations, public school personnel, state and local child welfare agencies, health care providers, social justice advocacy coalitions, and concerned individual citizens. Collectively, our members serve or represent every segment of the homeless population - including infants and toddlers, school-age children, youth in runaway and homeless situations, families fleeing domestic violence, persons with disabilities, and low-income working individuals and families. We ask you to read the following statement, share it with your community, and considering adding your organization to the list of endorsers.

To read the new paper, and to see a list of current organizations signed on, follow this link: [LINK](#)

To sign on, please email Matt Achhammer, at machhammer@npach.org, with your organization's information.

Guest Perspective: Public Housing Budget Slashed! Take Action Now!

By Sara Shortt – Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco

When is the last time you heard the President mention housing? In all of his state of the union addresses and stump speeches combined, the issue of housing simply never comes up. While it's obvious that Mr. Bush has other priorities such as the war and tax breaks for the wealthy, he has been known to at least give lip service to some issues that are important to working people such as health care, jobs and social security. Even if we don't like what he has to say about these issues, the President does invite them into the national debate. Housing doesn't even seem to be on the Administration's radar screen, however, despite the critical importance of the issue to most Americans.

Continue reading here: <http://www.npach.org/phcutsarticle.pdf>

News:

U.S. Census Data on Poverty Released

On August 29th, the U.S. Census Bureau released the 2005 Poverty, Income, and Health Insurance data. The analysis reveals that in 2005, 37 million Americans lived below the poverty line.

To read more, visit the following links:

Coalition on Human Needs Data Press Release (analysis by state):
<http://www.chn.org/pdf/2006/2005CensusPressRelease.pdf>

U.S. Census Bureau Press Release: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/007419.html

Increases in Homelessness Reported in New York and Los Angeles

Surge in New York's Homeless Population

A June 30 article in the *New York Post* notes an increase in the city's homeless population, especially among families and children. The Department of Homeless Service numbers stand in contrast to recent announcements of 'decreased homelessness' by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Read the article here: <http://www.npach.org/30jun06.htm>

L.A.'s Skid Row Reports Increase in Encampments:

A recently concluded Los Angeles Police Department homeless-population census finds that skid row's homeless population has risen about 10 percent.

<http://www.nbc4.tv/news/9694714/detail.html>

Advocates Question 10 Year Plan Strategy

"Unaddressed: Why Chicago's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness Will Not Work."

<http://nwitimes.com/articles/2006/08/04/news/illiana/8c796cee463e82f3862571c000038511.txt>

France: Police Evict Biggest Squat in France

The French police has evacuated the biggest squat in France, evicting hundreds of west African families from an old and disused hall of residence of a university in south Paris suburb Cachan.

Up to 1,000 squatters, including 200 children, many from Ivory Coast, Mali and Senegal, lived in 300 small student rooms with improvised wiring, poor sanitation and damp. Half were asylum seekers or illegal immigrants. The rest had legal status to remain in France. Although most of the squatters had jobs, they could not find housing because of racism and discrimination, support groups said. .

NGOs have criticised the French Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, who is one of the leading candidates for 2007 presidential elections, for having used the eviction as a publicity coup in order to appeal to far-right National Front voters.

From *FEANTSA Flash, July-August 2006*

Homes for Heroes: New Bill for Veterans

Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Representatives Rob Andrews (D-NJ) and Rick Renzi (R-AZ), recently introduced The Homes for Heroes Act (S. 3475/H.R. 5561), to expand and develop permanent housing opportunities for very low-income veterans. The legislation would establish new programs and actions for

veterans within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including supportive housing programs, set asides of housing vouchers for veterans, and inclusion of veterans in housing planning, among other new initiatives.

The Senate Housing and Transportation Subcommittee held an oversight hearing on August 2 on Meeting the Housing Needs of Veterans. Please visit <http://banking.senate.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Hearings.Detail&HearingID=231> to view testimonies of NCHV, Volunteers of America, and the government witnesses.

For more information on the bill: <http://www.nchv.org>

New Orleans Community Leaders to Visit Asia for Exchange with Tsunami Survivors

New Orleans, LA, September 7, 2006--Representatives from the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, the New Orleans East Vietnamese community, The Welfare Rights Organization of Gentilly, and St. Bernard Public Housing Complex "Survivors Village" are among a group of New Orleans housing and community activists visiting Aceh, Indonesia and coastal Thailand. They plan to tour areas affected by the 2004 tsunami and meet with small fishing communities and local grass roots organizations that are rebuilding and defending the human right to housing.

The visit is being coordinated by the New Orleans-based National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness (NPACH) and the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI), and follows a visit to New Orleans in June of activists from the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR). The on-going exchange between community leaders from some of the hardest-hit areas of the Gulf Coast and their counterparts in Asia represents an effort to learn firsthand about what survivors of the tsunami and hurricane, respectively, have been doing to rebuild their homes and lives.

The destruction from the Asian tsunami wiped out whole villages and left many of the poorest displaced from their homes, communities, and livelihoods. Many of the survivors that teamed up with ACHR received little or no support from their government and were in fact prohibited from rebuilding, in deference to commercial real estate and tourism ventures. Ignoring this forced exclusion, they built a network that provides support for participatory reconstruction, reoccupied their villages and are building thousands of homes on their own terms.

"This is an excellent opportunity to complete the first exchange and to learn, in person, from people advancing the rebuilding process in another part of the world. Though it is far away, we face similar challenges and hope to learn from their experience," said Pam Dashiell, President of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association

The New Orleans group will visit the Network of Tsunami-affected Communities in Rannong and Phang Nga Province, Thailand, featuring meetings and dialogue with small fishing villages that have negotiated for resettlement and community lease housing projects on government land and engaged in land sharing and cooperative agreements. The group will also spend several days visiting and touring with the Urban Poor Consortium in Indonesia to learn first hand about rebuilding efforts underway in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

For more information on NPACH's tsunami-hurricane exchange, contact Brad Paul, bpaul@npach.org or Tom Carton, tcarton@npach.org, (504) 524-8751

Partner Announcements

Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights- New Video on South Mississippi Housing Crisis

The bleak housing market faced by lower-income homeowners and renters in the Mississippi Gulf Coast is captured in The New Homeless, a seven-minute documentary film by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Told in the voices of Mississippi families and advocates, the film dramatizes the housing crises left in the aftermath of Katrina – from renters facing a wave of eviction threats, higher rents and abominable conditions left unrepaired by landlords – to homeowners struggling to obtain needed money to rebuild their homes and communities. You can view The New Homeless on-line at <http://www.lawyerscomm.org/2005website/home/video/thenewhomeless.html> or request a DVD copy from afoster@lawyerscommittee.org.

Iowa Housing Conference: "Building a Framework for Success" – September 19-20, 2006, Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines, Iowa. For more information: <http://www.ifahome.com/docs/IowaHousingConference7-20-06.pdf>

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, November 11-14, 2006, Little Rock, AR. "**Building Futures Through Education**". The 2006 NAEHCY Conference will focus on ensuring that every child and youth experiencing homelessness is successful - academically, personally and socially. This year's conference will offer sessions on effective school and community responses to homelessness, including practice-based strategies for implementing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and related legislation. We are also offering a special child welfare track, sponsored by Casey Family Programs, devoted to the education of children in foster care. This track will be open to all conference participants.

Click here for more information: <http://www.naehcy.org/2006conference.html>

National Forum on the Human Right to Housing, September 21, 2006, Washington, DC, Sponsored by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty & the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, and hosted by The Human Rights Clinic & Human Rights Law Society of The George Washington University Law School. Speakers include: Ajamu Baraka, US Human Rights Network, Maria Foscarnis, NLCHP, Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless; Brad Paul, NPACH, Bruce Porter, Social Rights Advocacy Centre; Sharda Sekaran, National Economic and Social Rights Initiative; Eric Tars, NLCHP, Philip Tegeler, Poverty & Race Research Action Council; Bret Thiele, Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions, Tanya Tull, Beyond Shelter

Click here for [directions and registration information](#).

Workshop Announcement

November 6–7, 2006, Washington, D.C. "Housing First" for Homeless Families & Individuals - Sponsored by Beyond Shelter. A comprehensive two-day training and technical assistance workshop on implementation strategies for the "Housing First" approach for families and individuals. The workshop will include panel presentations, interactive sessions, and the opportunity to work in small, special interest groups. For information and registration, call 213-252-0772

For more information, email forum@nlchp.org.

Give|10 Campaign

If you find the information in this newsletter valuable, please consider supporting it by joining our Give|10 campaign today. We're asking you to donate just 10 dollars to support our efforts, including:

- "The NPACH Report;"
- Our website, research, and free publications such as "Alternate Viewpoints;" (http://www.npach.org/m-v_hearing_alternate_viewpoints.pdf)
- Our grass roots organizing efforts, such as the campaign to expand the HUD Definition of Homelessness;
- Our technical assistance projects, which help local communities find reality-based solutions to their homelessness needs;
- Our ongoing work with communities recovering from devastating hurricane damage.

Individual donations allow us to continue speaking freely and honestly about the direction of federal homelessness policy and national advocacy. Please join us and become an advocate for the millions of Americans experiencing homelessness.

Learn more about the Give|10 campaign online: http://www.npach.org/give_ten.htm