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Coalition and Elected Officials Call for “Real Shared Sacrifice” to Address City & State Budget Crises

Organizations Focused on Needs of Seniors, Children, Homeless, Mentally Ill, People with AIDS: “Real Shared Sacrifice Includes Contribution from New York’s Highest Earners”

New York— As the City Council prepared to vote on Mayor Bloomberg’s recommendations for mid-year budget cuts, a coalition of over 190 community organizations, human service agencies, labor unions, and education advocates was joined by elected officials at City Hall today in calling for additional revenue to protect programs that benefit all New Yorkers.

"More seniors are turning to senior centers and other services as they grow poorer in this economy. Cutting caregiver support services by 30% and eliminating elder abuse services, social adult day care, intergenerational programs, and other services that allow seniors to remain in the community is the wrong decision. Now is not the time to weaken the safety net for older New Yorkers and create greater instability in their lives," said **Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy for the Council of Senior Centers and Services**.

The One New York: Fighting for Fairness Coalition urged State and City elected officials to enact fair and responsible measures to raise revenue, particularly raising the income taxes of New Yorker’s highest wage earners.

"Our children, our elderly, our sick and our disabled here today cannot sacrifice alone to solve this crisis. This diverse coalition supports developing revenues that make it clear all New Yorkers are in this together: rescinding the 7% City property tax reduction, cancelling the \$400 property tax rebate, creating progressive income tax reform on the local level, and bringing fairness back to New York State’s Personal Income Tax structure. We can ensure that this economic crisis is not balanced on the backs of our neediest households and communities," said **Jennifer March-Joly, Executive Director of Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York**.

More than 300 New Yorkers participated in the event, calling for “real shared sacrifice” to maintain services for children, the elderly, the sick, the disabled, and others in need.

"My six children use, or have used the city children's dental clinics and they have provided great service. They must not be closed," said **Janet Hernandez of Crown Heights, Brooklyn**. The Mayor’s budget modification proposes shutting 44 free dental clinics to save \$2.5 million dollars. According to the Center for Disease Control, tooth decay is one of the most common childhood diseases found primarily in poor neighborhoods. One of the few preventive health measures for children, the program provides accessible and convenient care often right in schools. The New York State Dental Association estimated many of the 17,000 children served by the program would not replace it with Medicaid care.

"I immigrated here from the Dominican Republic when I was very young and in 2007 I graduated with a great high school education. In spite of limited resources, my school paid attention to individual students and helped us succeed. For students like me to continue to succeed and go to college in increasing numbers, our schools can’t be asked to do the same job with less funding. As a CUNY student who pays my tuition out of pocket, due to restrictions on financial aid available to many immigrant students, I am struggling to come up with \$4000 for tuition. I am just

going to make it. If tuition goes up, I won't make it. Is cutting off access to college for students like me a wise investment in New York's future?," said **Adilka Pimental, a Youth Organizer at Make the Road New York**.

"We are ready to do our part to close the budget gap, including targeted cuts," said **Hector Figueroa, 32BJ Secretary Treasurer**. "But taking jobs away from the low-wage New Yorkers who keep schools clean during these tough times is a different story. These layoffs will leave hard working New Yorkers behind and make it harder for their communities to recover from this economic crisis." 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union represents 5,000 public school cleaners who face the largest cut to their budget ever if the current budget proposal is passed.

The Coalition also cited previous temporary increases in income tax rates, including following the downturn after September 11 the national recession, and the burst of the dot.com bubbles, leading economists, during which high-wage earners saw rapid income growth, the number of high-earners living in New York grew dramatically, and the state experienced job growth. Leading economists, including Nobel Prize Winner Joseph Stiglitz, support progressive increases taxes to successfully both maintain public services and boost the economy.

"Shared sacrifice must mean exactly that. We cannot ask our schoolchildren, our seniors, or New Yorkers with disabilities to bear the burden of our fiscal crisis alone. Fairness and commonsense demand that we also ask the wealthiest New Yorkers, those who have seen their state tax burden cut in half, to contribute a little more to the cost of keeping New York running. Modest income tax increases on the rich have helped keep our state solvent before, and they can help get us through this recession without sacrificing critical public investments," said **Dan Cantor, Executive Director of the Working Families Party**.

"Fixing the City budget gap by closing childcare centers, health clinics, and fire departments, by laying off NYCHA workers, or by cutting services, such as the 311 Information Center, that we need now more than ever will further increase unemployment when we need to put people back to work. We are tired of Reagan and Bush budgets that gut services and jobs to protect the most well off. It is time for a fair tax system," said **Ralph Palladino, 2nd VP, Local 1549, Clerical and Administrative Workers, DC 37 AFSCME**.

The One New York: Fighting for Fairness Coalition includes over 190 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.

Organizations represented in the coalition include: The Legal Aid Society; Citizen Action of NYC; Coalition for the Homeless; Working Families Party; Education Voters of New York; Alliance for Quality Education; New York Immigration Coalition; NY ACORN; Citizens' Committee for Children of New York; Campaign for Fiscal Equity; Legal Services NYC; Human Services Council; United Neighborhood Houses; and the United Federation of Teachers and American Federation of Teachers.

Below is the full list of signers is below.

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