

MEMO OF MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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Capitol Hill

Eleven Witnesses, No Supporters of Block Grant

Eleven witnesses appeared before the Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity on June 10 to discuss the Section 8 voucher program and the proposal to convert the program to a block grant. The hearing was one in a series, with the HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, Michael Liu, having appeared before the subcommittee on May 22 and another 10-witness hearing scheduled for June 17. In addition, in his opening statement, subcommittee chair Representative Bob Ney (R-OH) said that the subcommittee would hold field hearings about the Section 8 voucher program around the country as well. The first field hearing on the voucher program is scheduled for July 1 in Los Angeles.

The hearing was notable for the absence of any witness willing to express unequivocal support for the program. Although there was general agreement that improvements could be made to the voucher program under its current framework, 10 witnesses declared outright opposition to the plan to convert vouchers to a block grant. Both Terri Ceaser, a voucher holder from Hopewell, VA, and Telissa Dowling, a voucher holder from Guttenberg, NJ, testified about how the voucher had provided stability that allowed for better education opportunities for themselves and their children. Each said she was concerned that a block grant would not keep pace with housing costs over time, leading to a reduction in the quality or affordability of housing for tenants with subsidies.

Although Ms. Ceaser and Ms. Dowling – both of whom have roles representing voucher holders in a state-wide capacity – expressed confidence that their own

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HUD

Public Housing Operating Cost Study Released

The much-awaited Public Housing Operating Cost Study by Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, better known as "the Harvard Study," was released on June 6. In the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA), Congress created two separate funding streams for public housing – the operating fund and the capital fund—and directed HUD to convene negotiated rulemaking committees with the affected parties to determine distribution of the two funds. The Operating Fund Committee was unable to complete its assignment after determining HUD lacked the data to accurately determine how much it costs to run public housing. So in 1999, the HUD appropriations bill directed HUD to contract with Harvard to conduct the operating cost study.

Derived from three years of research, the study provides nine recommendations:

- Researchers suggest HUD use the inventory of multifamily rental housing whose mortgages are insured by the FHA to create a benchmark similar to one developed by the researchers that can be used to establish non-utility operating expense levels for public housing.
- Based on this FHA benchmark, and supported by field testing, non-utility

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POINT OF VIEW

by Sheila Crowley, President

There may be a silver lining to the tax cut debacle of the first half of 2003, which includes the \$350 billion tax cut act (that is more likely to cost \$800 billion), the discovery that child tax credits for low income working families had been dropped from the bill in the conference committee, and the current fight over how much the second tax cut bill should cost. This silver lining is the heightened public debate around the questions of who pay taxes, who has the heaviest tax burden, who needs tax relief, who should benefit from tax cuts, who will benefit from tax cuts, and whose money is it anyway? By pushing the tax revolt as far as they have (with the help of the White House), tax cut advocates may unwittingly be helping fair-minded Americans clarify their own values about paying taxes and what they expect from their government.

The partisan vote last week in the House of Representatives to fix the problem of 12 million low income children who were left behind in the first tax cut bill followed a contentious debate about who deserves tax cuts. The argument for leaving the families with earned income between \$10,500 and \$26,000 out of the original tax bill (besides that it was not affordable if they gave all the tax breaks to the people they wanted to) was that this group does not earn enough to pay federal income taxes. Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-AL) was widely quoted as saying the refundable child tax credit for this income group was nothing more than "welfare."

The implications of Mr. Bachus's remark

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states would not reduce the level of tenant input in the management of a potential voucher block grant program, neither was confident about the commitment of other states to tenant participation. Ms. Dowling also pointed out to Representative Gary Miller (R-CA), who said that homeownership was a better option for low income people, that the block grant could harm the current Section 8 homeownership program, reducing low income homeownership opportunities.

Some witnesses cited the complexity and obstacles that would result from a block grant, despite HUD's contentions that a block grant would be simpler. Craig Garrelts of the Hocking, OH, Metropolitan Housing Authority, appearing on behalf of National Leased Housing Association, said that the proposal to grandfather existing residents under current rules would make the program too complex. Andrew Showe of Showe Management Corporation in Columbus, OH, appearing on behalf of National Multi Housing Council, the National Apartment Association, and the Columbus Apartment Association, likewise expressed the concerns of the entities he was representing that state-level administration of the program would increase the administrative costs and complexity faced by landlords, reducing landlord participation. A block grant would require a different set of program rules for each state, territory, and the District of Columbia, creating chaos and additional bureaucracy, noted Neil Molloy of the St. Louis County Housing Authority, who testified on behalf of Public Housing Authorities Directors Association.

Tino Hernandez and Tuck Duncan, chairs of the New York City Housing Authority and the Topeka (KS) Housing Authority, respectively, also described the problems of adding a layer of administration. HUD would still need to work with public housing agencies in connection with public housing stock, Mr. Duncan pointed out, even if the voucher program were block granted. Indeed, the block grant would harm the ability of the programs to work together. James Inglis of the Livonia (MI) Housing Commission, testifying for the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, called HUD's search for administrative ease for itself into question, noting that HUD's focus should not be on what is best for HUD but how HUD can best help families.

Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA), ranking member of the subcommittee, said that she doubted waiting lists would ever shrink under a block grant because states would figure out a way to use the funding to make up for their own funding gaps. Mr. Molloy

agreed, saying that he was concerned states would use the block grant money for other purposes and pointing out that housing was not a first priority for many states. Ms. Waters also questioned whether landlords would want to be part of the program if rents no longer kept up with costs.

In addition, in Mr. Molloy's view, the imposition of a minimum rent of \$50 and the use of gross rather than adjusted income in determining tenants' share would hurt working families. Sandra Henriquez of the Boston Housing Authority, appearing on behalf of Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, described how the state voucher program in Massachusetts could not keep up with costs over time and turned to measures advocates fear could come with a block grant: allowing people with higher incomes participate; increasing the percentage of their incomes tenants pay in rent; and ultimately capping the program overall. Mr. Molloy's plea that the program is not broken, so "please don't break it," was echoed by Representative Artur Davis (D-AL), who said he saw no empirical need for a block grant.

The 11th witness, Barbara Thompson, representing the National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA), said that her organization neither supports nor opposes the proposal to convert the voucher program to a block grant. Ms. Thompson noted that NCSHA supports block grants to states in concept, but was concerned in particular about whether funding for the block grant would be sufficient. States would be good administrators, Ms. Thompson said, if the funding were sufficient and flexible; she recommended making voucher spending mandatory and providing for an annual adjustment. Representative Mark Green (R-WI) asked Ms. Thompson for written recommendations and legislative language.

Freddie Mac Scandal Heats Up

National news outlets have reported that Freddie Mac, the government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) formally known as the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, replaced its top three executives over accounting problems, a change that shook up the stock market and raised concerns about an impact on the housing market as well. Federal prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into possible misconduct at Freddie Mac, whose accounting is also being probed by other federal authorities.

In addition to the criminal investigation, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO) are investigating Freddie Mac. Freddie Mac said Wednes-

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National Housing Trust Fund Update from the Field

Campaign now has 4,200 endorsers

The National Housing Trust Fund Campaign continued to gain ground this week, reaching an impressive 4,200 endorsements. The National Urban Indian Development Corporation is among the new endorsers, as is the City of Bend, OR. Bend recently passed a resolution in support of the Trust Fund, making it the 42nd local government to endorse the campaign.



More information is available at www.nhtf.org.

Fact of the Week States with the Highest Percentage of Children in Poverty

- Washington, D.C.: 29%
- New Mexico: 26%
- Mississippi: 26%
- Louisiana: 26%
- West Virginia: 24%
- Texas: 22%
- Arkansas: 22%
- Alabama: 22%
- New York: 21%
- Oklahoma: 20%

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being*, 2003.

Tell Your Friends...

NLIHC membership is the best way to stay informed about affordable housing issues, keep in touch with advocates around the country, and support NLIHC's work. Membership information is available at www.nlihc.org, or by fax, mail, or e-mail. Just e-mail membership@nlihc.org or call 202-662-1530 to request membership materials to distribute at meetings and conferences.

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Philadelphia Coalition Wins \$10 Million

On June 5, the Philadelphia City Council passed an amendment adding \$10 million in new money earmarked for affordable housing to the FY03-04 Office of Housing and Community Development-Neighborhood Transformation Initiative budget.

The City Council's action is a direct result of steady urging over the past two years by the Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition, which is made up of 16 organizations that include the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and the Women's Community Revitalization Project.

"This is the first time that I can remember Philadelphia dedicating city funds for affordable housing," said David Koppisch, the leadership development and advocacy coordinator for the Women's Community Revitalization Project. "It was successful in part because it was the right time, and advocates were in the right place to make this happen for the City of Philadelphia."

The \$10 million dollar plan will provide new taxable bonds to the anti-blight initiative budget and will create three funds. The new funds will add:

- \$2.5 Million to the Neighborhood-Based Rental Production program, which will help finance the creation of an additional 100 units of affordable housing;
- \$5 Million to the Basic Systems Repair Program, which will repair and preserve at least 1,000 homes for low-income owner-occupants; and
- \$2.5 Million to the Adaptive Modification line item, to make 175 homes wheelchair accessible for disabled individuals.

"This was a great day for the people, our communities and for our efforts to solve the affordable housing crisis in Philadelphia," says Staci Moore of the Women's Community Revitalization Project, and member of the Coalition. "We now have momentum. This is just the beginning."

For more information, contact the Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition at 215-627-5550.

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day that since January it has been in full cooperation with an informal inquiry by the SEC. That informal inquiry has turned into a formal inquiry, the *New York Times* has reported. OFHEO supervises Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, its larger sister in the home mortgage market. Just a week prior to the allegations, OFHEO stated that it was satisfied with the orderliness of Freddie Mac's affairs. Reuters reported on June 12 that, in response to the recent events, the White House was urging Congress to act quickly on its nomination of New York investment banker Mark Brickell to direct the regulatory body. Mr. Brickell would take over from current director Armando Falcon, who submitted his resignation in February.

Earlier this year, Representatives Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced H.R. 2022, the Leave No Securities Behind Act, which would impose the registration and reporting requirements of the federal securities laws on the GSEs, including Freddie Mac. In a statement released on Wednesday, Mr. Shays noted, "This news clearly demonstrated OFHEO's failure as a regulator and the need to get Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to fully register with the Securities and Exchange Commission. For the sake of investor confidence, it is critical to get these two publicly-traded companies to comply with the same securities laws as every other publicly-traded company in the country."

In addition, Representatives Michael Oxley (R-OH) and Richard Baker (R-LA), chairs of the Committee on Financial Services and the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, respectively, announced on June 10 that the subcommittee will hold hearings on the irregularities and the oversight of the GSEs more generally. Senate Banking Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) has indicated that he will be convening hearings as well.

Congress Pays Attention to Homeownership Month

As Homeownership Month continues, HUD has been promoting its own initiatives to increase in homeownership rates, and several Members of Congress have applauded the Administration's attention to homeownership for low income people and minorities. In contrast, Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), ranking member of the House Committee on Financial Services, issued a press release this week on behalf of the Democratic members of the Committee, lambasting the Administration on its rhetoric on homeownership and a lack of commitment to affordable housing programs.

The statement asserted that the homeownership initiatives sponsored by the Administration have failed to create new homeowners. Citing statistics from the 2000 Census, the statement noted that homeownership rates for minorities have in fact dropped since President Bush took office. Mr. Frank said that the Administration's attention to homeownership initiatives is a tactic to cover up the cuts that have been made to several federal housing programs, including several related to public housing. The release also referenced the Administration's opposition to the National Housing Trust Fund, adding that last year "the Administration intervened to block an affordable housing construction initiative, which would have funded both affordable rental housing and homeownership."

On June 13, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs held a hearing on homeownership. Secretary Mel Martinez testified at the hearing and was followed by a panel of representatives of the housing industry community. The witnesses on the second panel were Bobby Rayburn of the National Association of Home Builders; Cathy Whatley of the National Association of Realtors; Tom Jones of Habitat for Humanity International; and Terri Montague of The Enterprise Foundation. The resonating theme throughout the hearing was that low income people may be able to afford a mortgage, but they cannot surmount the obstacle of providing a downpayment.

The Secretary spent a considerable amount of time discussing the American Dream Downpayment Act, which would create a set-aside within the HOME program. Several Senators questioned the relevance of the new program, since current HOME funds are already used for homeownership purposes. The Secretary insisted that this initiative would increase the scope of the HOME program. Mr. Martinez also discussed several of the Administration's other homeownership initiatives and programs, including using Section 8 vouchers towards homeownership.

Some members of the committee urged the Secretary to keep in mind that there are barriers to homeownership other than the inability to make a downpayment. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) mentioned that homeownership requires having affordable homes to buy, so more attention should be placed on production. He also noted that HUD's proposed cuts to public housing funding would mean that "we won't have the ability to put people in decent housing until they have a chance to buy." Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ) echoed that sentiment, saying that there was a need for more federal

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 programs to increase the housing stock, including rental housing.

The chair of the committee, Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), concluded the hearing by asking the second panel of witnesses to tell the committee what barriers other than income existed in buying a home. The responses included lack of affordable housing, land, and credit.

The Senators also gave substantial attention to the HOPE VI program. Some Senators expressed concern that HUD was not funding HOPE VI, a program that provides funding to create affordable housing for low income people in the form of both rental and homeownership, while increasing funding for a program that focuses solely on one aspect of the affordable housing shortage.

Allocations Announced, Along with a Bigger Deficit

Trying to operate within the context of a tight budget resolution and wanting to put an end to speculation that the Republicans, despite controlling Congress and the White House, would have no better luck pulling together a budget than when control was divided last year, the House Appropriations Committee announced the "302(b)" allocations to the 13 appropriations subcommittees on June 11. The VA-HUD subcommittee received an allocation of \$90.034 billion, nearly \$3 billion above the FY03 enacted allocation and \$600 million above the President's request. There is concern, however, that the voucher program alone is \$500 million short in the President's request. Fixing that problem would eat up the additional funding in the allocation, without even taking into account any restoration of HOPE VI or other HUD programs – much less funding issues within the other agencies in the subcommittee, such as Veterans Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency or NASA. Rumors are that the VA-HUD bill could be marked up in the next week or two; it is unclear whether such a schedule can be met, and a mark up could easily slip to July.

Adding to budgetary pressures, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) announced that the deficit is expected to exceed \$400 billion this year, exceeding the worst deficit ever, at \$290 billion in 1992. CBO had estimated just a month ago that the FY03 deficit would surpass \$300 billion. But that was before lawmakers approved the new tax cuts for families and investors. The current estimate is the first since the tax cuts were signed into law on May 28. This year will mark the second consecutive year with a budget deficit, follow-

ing four straight annual surpluses. According to Reuters, the latest projection is in line with earlier forecasts from other federal and private-sector analysts, who have predicted that falling tax revenues and rising defense spending will lead to record deficits in coming years.

House Maneuvers on Child Tax Credit Leave House and Senate Far Apart

Using procedural mechanisms, the House passed on June 12 a version of a bill that would accelerate the refundability of tax credits to low income working families, but would combine that modest benefit with extensions of the child tax credit for higher income families and a repeal of the expiration of the child tax credit in FY04. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities called the total package passed by the House, at \$82 billion, fiscally irresponsible, because it would lead to a further reduction in revenues upon which the federal government relies to fund programs that serve low income children. As a result, CBPP asserted that, given a choice between the House package and no package, no package would be the better outcome for low income children.

Members of the House opposed to accelerating the refundability of the child tax credit for low income working families said their position was justified because those families do not earn enough to pay income taxes and, even though they are subject to payroll taxes, those families get those payroll taxes returned to them in the form of Social Security later in life. A paper by the Democrats on the Joint Economic Committee pointed out, however, that, because of the deficit, payroll taxes – which otherwise should be set aside for Social Security – are financing general government operations similar to income taxes.

The House leadership has generally ignored the White House's recommendation that the House agree to the Senate's child tax credit bill, which would accelerate the refundability for low income working families, exempt service members' combat pay from consideration in determining the amount of the child tax credit to which they are entitled, and provide an offset through an extension of customs fees. Advocates plan to urge the White House to put more pressure on the House leadership to shift its support to the Senate bill.

House Extends TANF through September

Congress has been too occupied with issues such as tax cuts and Medicare to have spent time focusing on the expiring Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

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(TANF) legislation. The House of Representatives voted this week to extend the current TANF legislation, which is scheduled to expire on June 30, to September 30. After passing the House, the extension bill is now in the Senate, where no vote has been scheduled. While it will likely pass the extension bill, the Senate has also begun work on TANF legislation that could make substantial changes to the program. It has been reported that the TANF bill could be marked up as soon as the third week in July. Advocates remain concerned about strong Administration support of the “superwaiver,” a proposal that would allow a governor, with the permission of a cabinet secretary, to waive federal laws and regulations relating to several social service programs, including some housing programs. It has been reported that the “superwaiver” proposal could be offered as an amendment during the mark up. Housing and other advocates are preparing to launch campaigns to fight such a proposal.

Hearings, Hearings, Hearings

The Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity of the House Financial Services Committee has announced four upcoming hearings. On June 17, at 2 pm, the subcommittee will hold its third hearing on the Section 8 voucher program. On June 19, also at 2 pm, the subcommittee will hold a hearing on rural housing. Both hearings will be held in Rayburn 2128. During the July 4 recess, the subcommittee will hold two field hearings at the California Science Center, Loker Conference Center, Exposition Park, in Los Angeles. The Community Development Block Grant program will be the topic at a hearing on June 30 at 10 am, and the Section 8 voucher program will be considered at 10 am on July 1.

On the Senate side, the Special Aging Committee, chaired by Senator Larry Craig (R-ID), will hold a hearing on the Section 202 housing program on June 17 at 10 am in 628 Dirksen. The witnesses will be John Weicher, HUD Assistant Secretary for Housing and the FHA Commissioner; David Wood of the General Accounting Office; Cynthia Robin Keller of Volunteers of America; Tom Herlihy of National Church Residences in Columbus, OH; and Lee Ann Hubanks of Plano Community Homes in Plano, TX.

New Legislation

On June 10, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) introduced S. 1228. The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for property owners who remove lead-based paint hazards. The bill was referred to the Finance Committee.

S. 1237 was introduced by Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT) on June 11. The bill would amend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide for a more equitable allotment of funds to states for centers for independent living. The bill was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Representative Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) introduced H.R. 2422 on June 11. The bill was referred to the Financial Services Committee. It would authorize the Secretary of HUD to guarantee community development loans to the insular areas.

Bills at a Glance

Current information on legislation being tracked by NLIHC is now available through NLIHC’s new legislative action center, at <http://capwiz.com/nlihc/issues/bills/>.

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expense levels for public housing should be increased by 5% in the aggregate above current formula amounts.

- At least half of the recommended increase in formula amounts should be funded with PHA receipts that are currently excluded from operating subsidy calculations.

- In the short term, HUD should retain the current ‘rolling-base’ system for public housing utility funding. Over the long term, HUD should collect utility consumption data on a property-by-property basis for both public and FHA housing, forming the basis of a utility benchmarking system.

- The major argument for keeping the current funding approach, as opposed to benchmarking, is that public housing is different from other publicly assisted housing. The thrust of this report is that, from a purely regulatory standpoint, public housing is not that different. But where it is, public housing should be changed to be more like other publicly assisted housing.

- HUD should require property-based budgeting, accounting and management that are consistent with practices in private industry.

- The research did not determine the amount and kinds of resident services and programs for low income residents that are needed to affect well-run housing.

- The conversion of public housing to a development-based subsidy and financing program would complement both the formula changes and management reforms advanced here, particularly in five Bob Ney (R-OH), Chair of the Housing and Community Opportunity subcommittee, will also address the summit. An afternoon panel will include presentations from lending and housing leaders on rural homeownership issues and strategies.

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The summit will be held from 9 am to 4:30 pm on Monday, June 16, at the National Press Club. More information is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/RHS_Natl_Housing_Summit.pdf.

HUDClips

Under directive 03-14480, the Rural Housing Service (RHS) has proposed a rule to amend its regulations for the Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP). Under the GRRHP, RHS guarantees loans for the development of housing and related facilities for low or moderate income families in rural areas. Among the changes to take place is the lowering of the minimum level of rehabilitation work required when guaranteed loans are used for acquisition and rehabilitation. The GRRHP regulations are being amended to allow RHS, in the case of a default, to buy back guaranteed loans from investors. Comments on this proposal must be received by the Department of Agriculture on or before August 11, 2003.

All notices are available at www.hudclips.org.

News & Events

National Alliance of HUD Tenants Conference

The National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) will hold its 9th Annual "Save Our Homes Conference" from June 20-23, 2003 at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA. The conference will include sessions on organizing to preserve assisted housing, and will also include meetings with HUD officials and a press conference and rally to draw attention to the Administration's plans to block grant the voucher program. A complete schedule and registration information is available www.saveourhomes.org/.

Resources

KIDS COUNT

The Annie E. Casey foundation released its 14th annual KIDS COUNT Data Book this week. This year, along with the usual ten indicators such as the percent of babies born in a state with low birth weights and percent of children in poverty that are used to rank the states, the book includes supplemental data related to the theme of the report, "The High Cost of Being Poor." Housing plays a prominent role both in the data and the essay in this year's report.

In the report's statistical abstracts, housing is highlighted by the inclusion of the statistic "low income households with children where housing costs exceed 30% of income." "Low income" for the Casey foundation is two times the federal poverty level, or those families earning less than \$35,920. By this standard, New Jersey had the highest number of low income households that were housing burdened, followed by Connecticut, and Colorado. Those states with the lowest burdens were largely rural states, led by Wyoming and West Virginia.

The report's essay focuses on the high costs that low income people face in gaining access to housing and other necessities. In general, the book found that while the indicators of children's well-being had generally improved over the past decade, the gains look to be anything but secure. There continue to be substantial obstacles to the financial security of families, as well as considerable variation among states. Minnesota, New Hampshire, Utah, and New Jersey rank the highest for children; Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi rank among the bottom.

The information from the book and additional statistics are available on-line at www.aecf.org/kidscount. In cooperation with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, NLIHC will distribute copies of KIDS COUNT to all NLIHC members shortly.

Point of View *(cont'd from p. 1)*

are that poor people are not taxpayers and that welfare is only for poor people. If there is a category of people, other than perhaps people who are institutionalized, who do not pay taxes in some form (payroll, sales, utility, gas, etc., most of which are much more regressive than income taxes), I cannot think of who they might be. And as Mimi Abramovitz says in the 2001 reprise of her 1983 article: "everyone is on welfare." She builds on Richard Titmuss's 1965 framework that organizes the welfare state around social, fiscal, and corporate policy. Her analysis documents that all categories of people in the United States benefit from federal government expenditures ["Everyone is still on welfare: The role of redistribution in social policy." *Social Work*, 46(4),297-308]. Of note is Abramovitz's use in her recent article of NLIHC analysis of the ascending value of housing-related tax expenditures and the declining value of low income housing budget authority.

An honest and responsible premise upon which to base the current tax debate is that everyone pays taxes and everyone is on welfare. In other words, everyone contributes to and should benefit from the common wealth, the first definition of which is "the common well-being, the general good, public welfare, the prosperity of the community." Mr. Bachus and the rest of Congress might take a lesson from their former colleague who is now the governor of Alabama. Governor Bob Riley (R) has concluded that the common well-being and prosperity of the people of his state require that they cut taxes for the poor and increase taxes for everyone else, especially for the well-to-do.

NLIHC Staff

NLIHC Welcomes New Field Organizer

Katie Fisher has rejoined NLIHC as a field organizer, a new position recently added to expand NLIHC's organizing capacity. Katie graduated from Millikin University in Decatur, IL, last month with a bachelor's degree in communication and political science. Katie was most recently a field organizer on a winning congressional campaign in Maryland's 8th district. Previously, she spent a semester as an NLIHC intern, working on the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign. Welcome back, Katie!

NLIHC Staff

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About NLIHC: Established in 1974, the National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to ending America's affordable housing crisis. NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone. NLIHC provides up-to-date information, formulates policy, and educates the public on housing needs and the strategies for solutions.

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