

# MEMO OF MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

Volume 9, Issue No. 11 • March 19, 2004

## Housing in the 2004 Elections!

### Register NOW for NLIHC Annual Conference on April 26-27

Increasing voting among low income people is the only way to assure their interests are represented in Washington. Public opinion analyst Celinda Lake, voter engagement expert Frances Fox Piven, and House Minority Whip Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) are confirmed speakers at the NLIHC's annual housing policy conference and lobby day on April 26 and 27.

To register, and for the complete conference schedule, go to [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org).

## Capitol Hill

### House Budget Contains Bad News for Housing

The House Budget Committee passed an FY05 budget resolution on Wednesday, March 17, that restricts domestic spending at FY04 levels, lower than either the President's or the Senate's proposals. The House Committee's resolution also includes five-year budget caps that exclusively restrict spending, while offering protections for the Administration's planned tax cuts over the same period. In order to keep total spending at FY04 levels while increasing spending on defense and homeland security, the caps would necessitate large cuts in domestic discretionary programs over the next five years.

The House Budget Committee then went a step beyond the technically non-binding budget resolution by passing separate legislation that would mandate the spending caps through FY09. Budget Committee Chair Jim Nussle (R-IA) introduced the bill, the Spending Control Act of 2004, during the mark-up of the budget resolution. The bill would also require Congress to pay for any new entitlement spending with across-the-board spending cuts, but would not require the same for tax cuts.

The House Committee's approach contrasts with work done in the Senate, where Senators last week approved a pay-as-you-go amendment that would affect both spending and tax cuts. Democrats on the House Budget Committee unsuccessfully attempted to pass legislation similar to that which passed the Senate, with Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA) offering an amendment that would obstruct future tax cuts unless financed from spending cuts or increases in other taxes. "Deficits are the difference between revenue and spending, not just spending," he said. The amendment was defeated on 24-to-18 party-line vote. Representative Ron Kind (D-WI) called what passed the House Budget Committee "a veiled, cynical attempt to pretend that [Republicans] are being fiscally responsible without having to make tough choices."

During the mark-up, Representative John Lewis (D-GA) offered an amendment to fully fund the HOPE VI program. The amendment instructed Appropriators to fund the program at \$574 million, its FY03 level. Several Democrats, including Representative Artur Davis (D-GA), lauded the program. "HOPE VI expands homeownership and offers a better kind of public housing," he said. Nonetheless, the amendment was defeated, with Republicans asserting that the program had served its purpose and that \$2.5 billion in unspent funds remains obligated to PHAs. "Dignity of a home is important and we want to help people that need it,

(See *Capitol Hill* on p. 2)

## POINT OF VIEW

by Sheila Crowley, President

At first glance, the budget resolution that goes to the full U.S. House of Representatives this week is simply incongruous. In the name of deficit reduction, the House Budget Committee approved five years of binding caps on discretionary spending that reduces the federal contribution to most domestic programs by over \$120 billion and directs various committees to make \$13 billion worth of cuts in entitlements, including over \$2 billion from Medicaid. But simultaneously, the resolution calls for \$138 billion worth of tax cuts in the next five years that would seem to negate the deficit reduction effect of the spending cuts. And with the definition of "emergency" spending in the resolution, expenditures for defense and homeland security are essentially exempt from any belt-tightening. Yet the Budget Committee asserts it will cut the deficit in half in the next five years.

The Budget Committee also reported out the "Spending Control Act of 2004" that requires any new entitlement spending to be offset with other spending cuts, but excludes tax cuts from such offset rules. When asked why tax cuts do not need to be offset just as spending does, Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle replied that tax cuts "pay for themselves," presumably because tax cuts stimulate economic growth that in turn produces more tax revenue.

If Chairman Nussle really believes this rationale, at least it helps explain the budget resolution. But surely, he knows better. As Richard Kogan and others report in a re-

(See *Point of View* on p. 8)



NATIONAL LOW INCOME  
HOUSING COALITION

## Capitol Hill *(cont'd from p. 1)*

but if there is \$2.5 billion in unspent funds we need to work to make sure that money is spent efficiently," Mr. Nussle said.

The House Budget Reconciliation bill is scheduled to be debated on the floor next week, but it is unclear when the Spending Control Act will come to the floor. Some Republicans want to consider both legislative items at the same time. The Republican leadership, however, is not in a hurry to send the Spending Control Act to the floor, because they fear an attempt may be made to expand the bill to include tax cuts.

After the House passes its budget, the House and Senate versions will go to conference so Members can work out differences between the bills. Some Members have already indicated the process will be difficult. House Appropriations Chair Bill Young (R-FL) also expressed concerns over the committee's budget, saying that he does not like the five-year spending caps, but may support the two-year caps that passed in the Senate.

### Section 8 Advocacy Continues

In a variety of activities this week, advocates and Members of Congress continued to express strong support for full funding of the Section 8 program and opposing the President's Flexible Voucher Program.

On March 16, Ranking Banking Committee Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), sent a letter to Senators Ted Stevens (R-AK) and Robert Byrd (D-WV), Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee respectively, requesting full funding for the Section 8 voucher program and objecting to the Administration's block grant proposal. Forty-three Democratic Senators, including the presumptive Democratic Presidential nominee Senator John Kerry (D-MA), signed the letter.

The letter expressed concern that the funding cuts and program changes could lead to 250,000 families losing their housing assistance in 2005 alone. The letter went on to point out that public housing authorities (PHAs) had worked hard to improve their voucher utilization rates and now the Administration is "asking these agencies to operate this successful program with significantly less funding, an impossible scenario for most housing agencies."

Another letter, signed by 67 national advocacy organizations including NLIHC, will be sent to the chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees on March 22. A wide range of social justice advocates joined the letter, including the Children's Defense Fund, the Coalition for Human Needs, the National Coalition

for the Homeless, and the Alliance for Retired Americans. This letter echoes the Senate letter in requesting funding for all existing vouchers and urging a rejection of HUD's programmatic changes in the Flexible Voucher Program. "This shortfall comes at a time when a recent analysis of the American Housing Survey reveals 31% of all households had housing problems in 2001," the letter states.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) held a press conference on Wednesday, March 17, in a continuing effort to quantify the impact of the Administration's budget proposal. The call announced the release of a CBPP report that, for each PHA in the country, estimated how many vouchers would need to be cut or how much residents' rents would have to be raised if the President's proposal is enacted. On the call, Barbara Sard, Housing Policy Director at CBPP, Renee Glover, President and CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority and Curt Decker, Chair of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities described what the cuts would mean. More than a dozen newspapers across the country reported on the Center's findings. See *Resources* elsewhere in this issue for complete review of CBPP voucher research.

### Interagency Council Approves Hearing Turns Into Section 8 Debate

The House Appropriations VA-HUD Subcommittee held a hearing on the funding for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness on March 17. The hearing, however, turned into a debate on the President's Housing Voucher proposal, with Democrats questioning how the Administration could meet its goal of ending long-term homelessness while cutting voucher funding. Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the Council, testified at the hearing.

The Administration has requested \$1.5 million in administrative funds for the Council for FY05. The Council is made up of 20 federal agencies, including Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Labor. In his opening statement, Mr. Mangano testified that the Council's intent is "to bring together federal partners to address homelessness." Mr. Mangano asserted that the goal of the Council is to provide innovative "cost saving" ways for the intervention and prevention of homelessness.

Mr. Mangano also testified in support of the Samaritan Initiative, a multi-agency effort to address long-term homelessness through new federal housing and supportive services resources. In his FY05 budget request, the President requested \$70 million for the Samaritan Initiative: \$50 million would be allocated to HUD, \$10 million to the Department of Health and Hu-

*(See Capitol Hill on p. 4)*

## Update from the Field

Washington State Advocates Have Some Successes  
The 2004 legislative session in Washington State ended on March 11, and housing advocates ended the session having scored some wins and endured some losses in their legislative priorities. The state has a biennial budget and this year was not a budget year, so the session was comparatively short. "Overall, our success was modest, but significant," said Megan Farley of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA). "Next year, as a budget year, will be challenging."

WLIHA's legislative agenda included as its lead fiscal issue a statement that the legislature should "maintain the momentum to increase housing resources." While funding for the state's Housing Trust Fund was not officially under consideration this year, the legislature heeded WLIHA's message not to decrease the \$80 million in funding provided for the biennium in 2003 and, in fact, added \$1 million for a self-insurance risk pool.

A key issue for the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, with advocacy support from WLIHA, was the passage of a Homeless Family Services Fund. Through its supplemental budget, the legislature provided \$2.15 million in funds for housing and services for homeless families. This new fund will be modeled on the Sound Families program, a transitional housing program serving three counties in western Washington and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The state appropriation for the Homeless Families Services Fund is to be matched by funds from private foundations.

WLIHA also supported a successful effort by the Northwest Women's Law Center to end discrimination against victims of domestic violence. Under the legislation, victims of domestic violence can terminate their lease with proper notice to the landlord. The legislation also makes it illegal for a landlord to terminate the tenancy of or refuse to rent to a victim of domestic violence on the basis of their status as victims of domestic violence.

The legislature also passed legislation to authorize nonprofits to participate in self-insurance risk pools to help the organizations access needed insurance. In addition, the legislature appropriated \$1 million for the state's Housing Trust Fund to capitalize a self-insurance risk pool for non-profit developers, by implication directed at those using Housing Trust Fund resources for development. Advocates are still determining whether the appropriation will be stymied by a

(See **Update from the Field** on p. 7)

## Housing in the Elections Bush, Kerry Discuss Affordable Housing

President Bush and the campaign of the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Senator John Kerry (D-MA), each spoke this week about the affordable housing crisis in America. The debate comes at a time when many advocates and Section 8 voucher holders are immersed in a fight to stop the President's proposal to cut funding and bringing disastrous policy changes to the Housing Voucher Program.

At a campaign event in Pennsylvania, a state he is working hard to win in November, President Bush visited a first-time homebuyer and talked about his attempt to increase the number of minority homeowners in America. He did not mention his voucher proposal, known as the Flexible Voucher Program.

"Homeownership in America is at the highest rate ever... We think it is in the best interest of the country that people own something," President Bush said as he greeted Pearl Cerdan, an Ardmore, PA, resident who bought her house with help from housing counselors and a private builder.

Senator Kerry's campaign responded with a conference call in which Andrew Cuomo, housing secretary in the Clinton Administration, offered another view of the President's record. "What is the point of getting the American family to buy a home and realize the American dream if tomorrow it's going to turn into a nightmare because they can't afford to make the payment because of the other financial pressures?" the *Associated Press* reported Mr. Cuomo as saying. Mr. Cuomo also criticized the President's plan to cut federal funding for affordable housing, specifically mentioning cuts to the voucher program and public housing. "For many middle-class American families, his tenure has been a nightmare, not a dream," he told the *Washington Post*.

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## HUD

### Bernardi Nominated as Deputy HUD Secretary

President Bush has officially nominated Romolo A. "Roy" Bernardi, currently Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, to be Deputy HUD Secretary. This is the second-ranking position at HUD and requires confirmation by the Senate.

Acting Secretary Alfonso Jackson, who is currently awaiting Senate approval to be HUD Secretary, served in the deputy position under former Secretary Mel Martinez. Mr. Martinez resigned last December to run for the Senate in Florida.

(See **HUD** on p. 6)

## Capitol Hill *(cont'd from p. 2)*

man Services, and \$10 million to the Veterans Administration. In addition, Representative Rick Renzi (R-AZ) is planning to introduce a bill with authorizing language for the Samaritan Initiative, which if passed would strengthen the budget request and increase the likelihood that Appropriators would fund the initiative.

The Samaritan Initiative is a lynchpin in the Administration's efforts to end long-term homelessness, which it says it will do in the next decade. In light of this goal, Representatives Sanford Bishop (D-GA) and David Price (D-NC) asked Mr. Mangano pointed questions on how the President's proposed changes to the voucher program would impact the homeless population, since homeless service providers rely on vouchers to move families into permanent housing. Mr. Mangano agreed that he relied on vouchers when he was a homeless service provider in Boston, but said that he "ran into frustration trying to maximize resources" and that he hoped that the changes proposed in the Flexible Voucher Program would allow service providers to serve more families.

Mr. Price questioned Mr. Mangano's optimism. He asserted that the choices providers will face if the Flexible Voucher Program is enacted will exacerbate the homelessness problem and "would affect the poorest people, the ones more susceptible to homelessness."

### House Comm. Passes Small PHA Bill

The House Financial Services Committee this week passed H.R. 27, the Small Public Housing Authority Act. Introduced by Representative Doug Berueter (R-NE), the bill would exempt small PHAs from submitting an annual plan to HUD. Mr. Berueter asserted that the intent of the bill is to "reduce regulatory barriers for small PHAs." He said that small PHAs do not have the resources to do PHA plans and that this bill would allow them more time to focus on residents.

H.R. 27 was introduced in early January 2003. During this week's mark-up, the bill was amended to provide protections for tenants and to broaden the definition of a "small" PHA. As amended, the bill defines a small PHA as a non-troubled PHA with fewer than 100 Section 8 vouchers and public housing units combined. The bill would also allow tenants to continue participating in establishing the PHA goals and objectives. "This is the good way to do flexibility – flexibility with rules," said Ranking Member Barney Frank (D-MA).

The original bill language was in the omnibus housing bill H.R. 3995, the Housing Affordability for America Act of 2002, that was introduced by Representative Marge Roukema (R-NJ) in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. The leg-

islative language in that bill did not include tenant protections, and it defined a small PHA as having fewer than 300 units.

The bill passed on voice vote. No date has been set for consideration in the House.

### House Holds Housing Counseling Hrg

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity held a hearing this week titled "Successful Homeownership and Renting Through Housing Counseling." The hearing was held to solicit views on H.R. 3938, which would establish an Office of Housing Counseling in HUD to oversee counseling on homeownership and rental housing issues. Panelists included HUD's Assistant Secretary for Housing and Federal Housing Commissioner John Weicher, plus representatives from community and industry groups.

Introduced by Subcommittee Chair Bob Ney (R-OH), the Expanding Housing Opportunities Through Education and Counseling Act would establish a toll-free telephone number to provide referrals to individuals who are seeking counseling, and a website for individuals to access materials related to homeownership and counseling. The bill also requests \$45 million each year for the next four years to carry out local counseling activities, including providing grants to counseling organizations.

In his opening statement, Mr. Ney said that the mission of the Office of Housing Counseling would be "to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the counseling services provided through the HUD programs." The bill is intended to provide counseling to homeowners and renters, in light of both the Administration's efforts to increase homeownership and the fact that foreclosure rates are at an unprecedented high. "Counseling should be an integral part of affordable housing in the United States," said Mr. Ney said. Currently, a Housing Counseling Assistance program is funded as a set-aside in the HOME program.

While most of the hearing was focused on homeownership and preventing foreclosures, advocates for affordable rental housing and rental counseling participated as well. In her opening statement, Ranking Subcommittee Member Maxine Waters (D-CA) stressed the importance of a balanced approach that included renters. Representative Artur Davis (D-GA) asked Mr. Weicher, whose department administers the housing counseling assistance program, how the current counseling program in HOME benefits renters. Mr. Weicher explained that some counseling agencies provide counseling to help renters find apartments.

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## Capitol Hill *(cont'd from p. 4)*

Mr. Ney commented that it is important that counseling be available to help people find affordable rental housing, because in “some real estate markets across the country, finding affordable rental properties can be extremely difficult.”

Continuing the discussion on rental housing, Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) asked Mr. Weicher to comment on the establishment of a National Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Weicher responded that he could not support the idea because the legislation uses surplus FHA funds as the source of revenue, which he said would put the FHA fund at risk. Both Ms. Velazquez and Ms. Lee questioned Mr. Weicher’s assertion.

Lisa-Nicolle Grist, Director of Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN), Inc. in Brooklyn, NY testified that, “in addition to homeownership counseling, the need for rental counseling is overwhelming.” Ms. Grist testified that her organization provides “displacement counseling,” which she explained is offered to low income families that are victims of gentrification. She said that her organization helps families to relocate or obtain rental subsidies to stay in their homes. “Due to the high cost of housing and the excess of demand over supply, displacement counseling is one of NHN’s most important types of work,” said Ms. Grist.

Mr. Ney expressed interested in Ms. Grist’s testimony and said that there may be an opportunity in this bill or in the future to do more for “displacement counseling.” He said he would look into it further and would like to work with Ms. Grist on the issue.

Other panelists also advocated for rental housing. Mr. Douglas Bibby, President of the National Multi Housing Council, testified that “America has an acute need for rental housing.” He urged the subcommittee to incorporate rental specific counseling programs into the proposed Office of Housing Counseling. Mr. Bibby also urged the subcommittee to “work together to craft new housing policies that ensure everyone has access to decent and affordable housing—regardless of whether they own or rent.”

Mr. Ney introduced H.R. 3938 on March 11. Representatives Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) and David Scott (D-GA) are original cosponsors of the bill.

### House, Senate Will Consider TANF

Congress needs to take action on TANF reauthorization soon, as the current legislation expires March 31. The House passed a new TANF bill last summer, but the Senate has not, and so the program, which was

originally set to expire in 2002, has been operating under a series of extensions.

This week, Representative Wally Herger (R-CA), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, introduced H.R. 3848, to extend the TANF program through June 30. Previous extensions have not made any program changes, but instead have simply continued the current law. H.R. 3848, however, would extend funding while increasing the work participation rates that states must meet to avoid federal penalties. This change would cause states to significantly reduce the number of people receiving TANF who do not have jobs.

No action has been scheduled for H.R. 3848, but the introduction of the bill puts pressure on the Senate to complete its work on TANF reauthorization, which it may do as early as the last week in March. The Senate Finance Committee passed a TANF bill in September.

The TANF bill as passed by the Senate Finance Committee included a troubling ‘superwaiver’ demonstration program that would give governors in 10 states the ability to waive federal laws and regulations related to TANF, the child care block grant, and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). The superwaiver could also allow states to supplant state funding with federal funding, thereby causing programs to lose funding.

The original superwaiver language included public housing and homelessness programs, but after hearing from low income housing advocates about serious concerns about housing programs being subject to the superwaiver, Senators convinced Senator Grassley (R-IA), Chair of the Finance Committee, to remove public housing and homelessness programs from the proposal.

However, housing advocates are concerned that Senators may attempt to insert housing and homelessness programs back into the superwaiver proposal on the Senate floor and are contacting their Senators to ensure that public housing and homelessness programs do not reappear in the superwaiver proposal.

The TANF reauthorization bill that passed the House last summer includes the superwaiver proposal, and housing and homelessness programs are included in the scope of the proposal.

### NLIHC to Testify Next Week

NLIHC President Sheila Crowley is scheduled to testify before the House Appropriations VA-HUD Subcommittee and Financial Services Housing and Opportunity Subcommittee next week.

*(See Capitol Hill on p. 6)*

## Resources

### Resources on Housing Vouchers

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) has released new reports looking at the Administration's proposal for the housing voucher program. These reports analyze the potential impact of the Administration proposals and critique both the justifications for and the consequences of them.

The first study, "The Local Impact of Proposed Cuts in Federal Housing Assistance," finds that local housing agencies would have to scale back assistance by 12% in 2005 and by 30% by 2009 if the President's cuts are approved and distributed proportionally. This study contains a state and public housing agency (PHA) level analysis of the impact of the Administration proposals in 2005 and 2009. It shows how voucher funding would be reduced under the proposals, and also shows the reduction in the number of families assisted if cuts were carried out by eliminating vouchers, and the increase in annual rent if cuts were carried out by raising rents.

The press release can be found here: [www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-pr.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-pr.htm). State and PHA level data can be found at [www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-states.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-states.htm).

"Passing the Buck" looks at how the Administration's proposals to change the voucher program would force responsibility for funding cuts upon local and state agencies. Agencies would have to decide between cutting large numbers of vouchers, raising rent burdens, or shifting vouchers away from poorer families. The report states that while it is possible to provide PHAs with more flexibility in certain areas, these changes do not have to come at the expense of the voucher program's effectiveness. The changes in the voucher program proposed by the Administration, however, mean that any increased flexibility for PHAs may simply mean they have more flexibility in deciding how to implement the funding cuts. The report is available at [www.cbpp.org/3-16-04hous.pdf](http://www.cbpp.org/3-16-04hous.pdf).

"HUD's Reliance on Rent Trends for High-End Apartments to Criticize the Housing Voucher Program is Mistaken" looks at how HUD has used a recent *New York Times* article to argue that voucher costs are rising faster than they should be. The *Times* article cited by the Administration found that market rents had declined in ten metropolitan areas between 2002 and 2003. However, the CBPP report states that the *Times* article

*(Continued next column)*

## Capitol Hill *(cont'd from p. 5)*

Ms. Crowley has been asked testify on Wednesday, March 24, before the Housing Opportunity Subcommittee on the Zero Downpayment Act of 2004. H.R. 3755 would allow low income families to obtain FHA mortgages without having to provide funds for any up-front costs, including closing costs or administrative fees.

Ms. Crowley will also testify on Thursday, March 25, before the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee on the 2005 HUD budget. She will testify in support of full funding for the Housing Voucher program and in opposition to the President's Flexible Voucher Program.

### Bills at a Glance

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

## HUD *(cont'd from p. 3)*

Mr. Bernardi will have to await Mr. Jackson's approval as HUD Secretary before moving into the new position. While Mr. Jackson went before the Senate Banking Committee for his confirmation hearing in late February, a vote on Mr. Jackson's confirmation has not yet taken place. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) continues to object to HUD's release of rules related to the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act that are currently pending at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Recently OMB announced that it would not make a decision on the rules for another 30 days, making it likely that Mr. Jackson's approval is at least another month away.

*(Continued from previous column)*

cited data for high-end apartments, and not those affordable to voucher households. This report also argues that ensuring the accuracy of the fair market rents (FMRs) HUD uses to determine local market conditions is a better way to guarantee costs in line with actual market conditions. The report is available at [www.centeronbudget.org/3-16-04hous2.htm](http://www.centeronbudget.org/3-16-04hous2.htm).

These reports provide a good background for those working to rebut the Administration's proposals for the voucher program. These and other reports on housing vouchers can be found on CBPP's voucher webpage at [www.cbpp.org/housingvoucher.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/housingvoucher.htm).

## Update from the Field *(cont'd from p. 3)*

technicality. WLIHA also supported legislation to address the liability of condominium owners because insurance rates have reduced the development of affordable condominiums. The effect of the legislation that ultimately passed, however, is uncertain.

WLIHA faced some disappointments during the past legislative session as well. WLIHA advocated for legislation that would create a mechanism for enforcement of the state's mobile home landlord-tenant law. Mobile home tenants and landlords would pay a nominal fee to finance the operation of the enforcement program. Though successful in committee, the bill died because it was never brought for a vote on the House floor.

Another lead policy objective this session for WLIHA was legislation that would have required landlords to pay relocation assistance to low income tenants in cases where the rental housing has been condemned or found unfit for occupation. The legislation passed the House but died in the Senate. WLIHA also pursued some technical fixes to legislation previously enacted that provides operating funds for non-profits through an increase to document recording fees. This corrective legislation passed the House but did not make it through the Senate.

In other Washington State news, the Tenants Union (TU)—a grassroots organization that provides direct assistance to tenants and engages in public policy advocacy in support of tenants' rights and the production and preservation of low income housing—is facing a severe cut to its funding. The City of Seattle pulled back on a commitment of \$72,000 for support of the TU. The TU has responded with direct actions to draw attention to this funding cut and to urge the city to reinstate the funding.

For more information: Shane Rock, WLIHA, 206-442-9455; Carla Okigwe, Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County, 206-682-9541; Siobhan Ring, Tenants Union, 206-722-6848.

### 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](http://www.nlihc.org).

## NLIHC News New Staff Member

Matt Achhammer has joined the National Low Income Housing Coalition staff as the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign Organizer. In his new role, Matt will work with endorsers and sponsoring organizations across the country to bolster support for the Trust Fund.

Matt comes into the position already having done significant work on the Trust Fund Campaign. Most recently, Matt was policy specialist for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, where he worked on health and housing policy including the Trust Fund. Previously, he was a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center, placed at the National Coalition for the Homeless working on housing policy, and at the Campus Kitchens Project in St. Louis, MO. Matt worked with the Trust Fund Campaign in each of these roles. He is a native of Sugar Notch, PA, and attended Gettysburg College, where he majored in Theatre and English.

Matt can be reached at [matt@nlihc.org](mailto:matt@nlihc.org) or at 202-662-1530x229.

## Fact of the Week Impact of proposed Administration cuts to the housing voucher program

	2005	2009
Funding Cuts	\$1.6 billion	\$4.6 billion
Deal with cuts by:		
Dropping families*	250,000 families cut	600,000 families cut
Charging higher rents*	\$850 more per family	\$2,000 more per family

\*"Dropping Families" refers to the number families needed to be dropped from the voucher program if the cuts were dealt with solely in this manner. "Charging higher rents" looks at how much more each family would have to pay on average if funding cuts were dealt with solely by raising rents.

Source: CBPP, "Many Low-Income Families Would Lose Federal Housing Assistance under Proposed Funding Cuts." [www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-pr.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/3-17-04hous-pr.htm).

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

sponse to Chairman Nussle's assertion, no serious economist of any political persuasion would support the chairman's claim. ("Too good to be true," [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org).)

The way to make sense out of the budget resolution is to understand the long-term objective of the conservative movement to shrink government as much as they possibly can. Cutting taxes to the point that the deficit grows to crisis proportions will force further spending cuts. When discretionary spending is squeezed dry, the attack on entitlements can begin in earnest.

This agenda is laid out in this month's issue of *American Spectator* by Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform, who enumerates the next six items on his agenda in an article called "The Second Term Diet." He wants immediate outsourcing of 850,000 fed-

eral civilian jobs that will become the model for state and local governments. He wants more base closings and suggests that 25% of all military bases can be eliminated. He wants changes to trade policies that will do away with all arguments in favor of farm subsidies. He wants to expand school vouchers to reduce spending on education. He wants health savings accounts, which will promote cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. And of course, the big prize will be the privatization of Social Security, with the prediction that once every young person has shifted to personal savings accounts, the Social Security taxes will be reduced by 83%. [www.atr.org/pdffiles/030404SpectatorArticle.pdf](http://www.atr.org/pdffiles/030404SpectatorArticle.pdf)

This is the method in the madness and why Chairman Nussle's budget plans must be defeated this week. Call your Member of Congress now. A call to action, "Tell Your Representative: JUST VOTE NO! on the House Budget Resolution," is posted at [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org).



**National Low Income Housing Coalition**  
**Memo to Members**  
**March 19, 2004**  
**Vol. 9, No. 11**

**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.

**MEMO TO MEMBERS**