

ONE FINAL CHANCE TO STOP BUDGET CUTS AND TANF CHANGES:

CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE THIS WEEK

[January 24, 2006] In December, the House voted 212-206 and the Senate voted 51-50 (with Vice President Vice President Cheney casting the tie-breaking vote) to pass a budget reconciliation spending reduction package (S 1932) that would cut more than \$39 billion over five years from programs affecting low- and moderate-income people. However, the Senate passed a version slightly different than the House, so the House must pass the Senate version before the legislation can go to the President for signature.

The House is expected to vote on these budget cuts on February 1, so you have one more chance to contact your Representative and urge that they vote NO on the budget package that would severely impact those most in need in our nation.

Call your U.S. Representative toll-free at 800-426-8073 THIS WEEK. (This number is generously provided by the American Friends Service Committee.) This number will connect you to the Capitol switchboard. The person at the switchboard can connect you to your Representative's office, and if you're not sure who your Representative is, find out at <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/dbq/officials/>.

When you reach the office, ask that your Representative vote NO on the budget reconciliation spending reduction bill (S 1932) when it comes to a vote next week. Urge him/her to defeat this proposal -- that bases budget reductions primarily on programs that serve those most in need, including seniors, people with disabilities, women, and children. Call on them instead to strengthen federal commitments to people in need and to follow ethical values of justice for the poor, welfare for children, hospitality to the stranger, and assistance to the disadvantaged.

The package includes:

- \$16 billion over 10 years in increased Medicaid co-payments and premiums and benefit reductions,
- A provision that allows states to deny contraception to poor women. Family planning services are a mandatory under current Medicaid law. Under the conference agreement, states would no longer be required to cover such services.
- Child support enforcement cuts that will lead to nearly \$8 billion in lost child support collections over 10 years,
- Cuts a net amount of \$12.7 billion from the federal student loan programs,
- Reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, making significant changes to work participation requirements that would put enormous pressure on state child care programs and could lead to a sharp drop in funding for low-income working families not receiving TANF. In order to meet both the child care and work costs of these new requirements, states may decide to cut child care for low-income working families who are not receiving TANF cash assistance. By 2010, an estimated 255,000 fewer child care slots will be available for low-income working families than in 2004.

--Carolynn Race

Want to do more? Send your Representative an e-mail. Go to <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/issues/alert/?alertid=8370016&type=CO> to send an e-mail.

General Assembly Policy:

The 207th General Assembly (1995) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called on Congress "to defeat any proposals that base budget or deficit reductions primarily on the services provided to children, families, the needy, and the

homeless" and urged strengthening of federal commitments to these groups. The Assembly also called on Congress "to insist on a government that follows ethical values of justice for the poor, welfare for children, hospitality to the stranger, and assistance to the disadvantaged." (Minutes, p. 718)

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