



Michigan League FOR Human Services

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President's Budget Reflects Wrong Priorities and Would Add to State's Fiscal Crisis

The Michigan League for Human Services today expressed opposition to the Bush Administration's 2008 federal budget, which would weaken a broad range of necessary government services and exacerbate Michigan's already serious budget problems. The budget would extend tax cuts currently in place that benefits very wealthy taxpayers.

This budget says that helping low-income families and maintaining investments in education isn't as important as extending tax cuts for wealthier taxpayers, said League President Ann Marston. Those are the wrong priorities for Michigan and for the country, Marston said.

Some programs that help large numbers of low-income Michigan residents would be eliminated entirely. Other programs would be cut deeply over the next five years, including child care funding, low-income energy assistance, Head Start funding, K-12 funding, and Community Development Block Grant Funding.

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The result would be a shift of billions of dollars in costs to Michigan and other states, forcing them scale back key public services or find additional revenues to fill the gap. Michigan's budget is already severely constrained and additional revenues are being sought to cover shortfalls in state revenue.

Michigan would be hard-pressed to make up the loss in federal funds for these programs if the President's budget is adopted, stated Marston.

In addition to the proposals in the President's budget, Congress faces important decisions this year about other programs as well. The Food Stamp Program and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) are both up for renewal in 2007, and the Michigan League for Human Services has urged Congress to strengthen these highly successful programs so they can help more people who need it.

While food stamps have made major inroads against hunger and malnutrition in this country, food stamp benefits often are not enough for a family to afford a nutritious diet, and many people who need help are not eligible. Similarly, while SCHIP has helped reduce the share of low-income children who are uninsured, states will need additional funds in coming years to maintain their SCHIP programs and cover more of the uninsured.

It is critical that these important components of Michigan's social safety net be maintained, " said Marston. The level of need in Michigan is increasing in response to our lagging economy and these programs are essential. "

The Michigan League for Human Services is a state-level policy organization founded in 1912 that is focused on the needs of low-income residents throughout Michigan and dedicated to advancing policies that can help them achieve self-sufficiency. The League has over 1,800 organizational and individual members representing business, labor, human services professionals, faith-based organizations, academics and concerned citizens.

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