



Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

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Wade J. Henderson

February 3, 2009

Support the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (S. 1)

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse coalition of civil and human rights organizations, with nearly 200 member organizations, we are writing to urge your support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (S. 1). This bill is a balanced package that will alleviate mounting economic hardships and provide the most effective economic stimuli to our faltering economy.

Economists across the political spectrum agree that the most effective approach to economic recovery is the one taken by S. 1: an approach that targets assistance to low- and moderate-income people, and provides aid to states and localities to prevent service and job cuts that will deepen the recession.

LCCR believes the remedies in the Senate legislation are urgently needed. The Senate bill contains an array of federal actions that include short-term infusions of cash into the economy, as well important investments that will help the nation to rebuild. In addition, the bill addresses critically important needs for food, health care, and housing. Among the most important components of the bill are the following:

- Tax cuts targeted at low-income people, such as the Child Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the new Making Work Pay credit, which will speed income to the low- and moderate-income people whose spending will create and save jobs. We strongly favor calculating the value of the refundable Child Tax Credit starting with the first dollar of earnings, as provided in The American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009 passed by the House.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP; formerly food stamps), which will allow many millions of distressed families to purchase more of the food they need.
- A one-time increase in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) that will help poor people with disabilities and poor elderly to afford to meet more of their basic needs.
- Restoration of federal matching funds for state child support enforcement, thereby protecting children and families from losing \$1 billion a year in child support collections.
- Increased aid to states to prevent cuts in Medicaid, education, and many other programs, thereby forestalling loss of medical and many other services, layoffs,

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and shrinking income to service providers.

- Expansion and extension of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits and an increase in the current average UI benefit by \$25 per week.
- An increase in funds for child care and Head Start.
- Investments in communities through repair, renovation, and rebuilding of schools.
- Investments in people, through increases in job training for adults (including seniors), youth, and dislocated workers.

These provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help to alleviate hardships for those most vulnerable, and in so doing, will foster economic growth. We urge you to provide the help to Americans that is most needed, and look forward to working with you to ensure the economic recovery package's speedy enactment. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Zirkin at 202-263-2880 or Corrine Yu, LCCR Senior Counsel, at 202-466-5670.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wade Henderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Zirkin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President