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CABHN FEVER

Important Information for Social Security and Social Security Income Recipients

A recent proposed settlement agreement resolving the lawsuit of *Martinez v. Astrue* has led the Social Security Administration (SSA) to stop, as of April 1, 2009, suspending or denying benefits due to the existence of a warrant, unless the warrant has been issued in a criminal proceeding on a flight or escape charge. For individuals who had benefits suspended or denied after January 1, 2007 due to the mere existence of a warrant, retroactive benefits will be paid. Over 80,000 people could benefit from this settlement, eligible for over \$500 million in withheld benefits.

Individuals whose benefits were suspended or denied from 2000 to 2006 will be notified and extended the opportunity to reestablish eligibility with a protective filing date of April 1, 2009 if they contact SSA within six months of receiving notice.

The lawsuit was brought as a challenge to a provision of the Social Security Act which sought to prevent individuals from using government benefits to flee arrest by matching names in a warrant database to those at SSA. This resulted in automatic benefit suspensions involving false or unproven allegations and minor infractions. This affected many elderly or disabled individuals who rely on Social Security as their sole income.

This settlement does not apply to individuals whose benefits were denied or suspended because of an alleged parole or probation violation. ☞

This information was obtained from the National Senior Citizens Law Center, Aug. 13, 2009

For more information about the policy, the case and the settlement agreement, visit: <http://www.nslc.org/areas/social-security-ssi/Martinez-Settlement>.

Citizens' Election Program: New Opportunity for Involvement

In 2005, Connecticut passed the Citizens' Election Program, which provides public grant money to individuals running for state office, if they can meet certain qualifications. This public money is designed to provide an alternative source of funding for campaigns and limit the influence of corporate lobbyists and other special interest groups. The law also outlaws campaign donations from lobbyists and state contractors. The Citizens' Election Program was used for the first time in the 2008 Connecticut elections. 71% of seated state representatives and 89% of seated state senators used funding from the Citizens' Elections Program

in their campaigns.

The program offers a new opportunity for people of all walks of life to get involved in the political process and make their voices heard. Common Cause in Connecticut, a non-partisan organization committed to citizen involvement, is getting ready for the 2010 elections and is particularly interested in increasing the participation of underrepresented communities and young activists in the political process.

If your organization would like to schedule a presentation on the Citizens' Election Program and how

(See Citizen's Election, p. 2)

"The State of Working Connecticut 2009"

Connecticut's current recession has been particularly severe, marked by historically high unemployment levels and racial and ethnic disparities in unemployment, according to a new Labor Day report on jobs and wages in the state. "The State of Working Connecticut 2009," released by Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based policy think tank, also finds that stagnating wages and racial and ethnic wage gaps reveal longer-term economic problems that threaten the ability of many families to weather the recession. Wages have stagnated or declined for the bottom

(See Working CT 2009, p. 2)

Very Important Back to School Information



Schools send a lot of information to parents at the beginning of the school year, including the form for participation in school meal programs like school lunch and breakfast. School Meal Applications determine whether students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. They are also used for other purposes and programs that bring funding into a school district, such as Title 1 funding and school eligibility status for afterschool snacks and summer food.

How to obtain service:

Ask at school to see if the school offers the program (most do) and if so, obtain an application from the school. Families enrolled in SNAP/Food Stamps or TFA are automatically eligible for FREE school meals. New applications can be filled out any time there is a change in family income.

(See Back to School, p. 2)

Does Someone in Your Life Have Mental Illness?

The *Family To Family Education Program* is a FREE, 12-week course offering support and education to family members and friends of individuals with serious mental illness. The course is taught by trained NAMI-CT members.

Classes In Manchester!!!

Start: Tuesday, 09/22/2009

Time: 6:30 to 9:00 PM
Manchester- CT

For information and registration contact:
Cheri at 860-268-2974 or Liz at 860-982-5009

Citizen's Election (cont. from p.1)

your members can be more involved in the 2010 election (in the campaigns and parties of their choice), contact Cheri Quickmire or Kim Hynes at Common Cause (tel.: 860-549-1220 or e-mail cquickmire@commoncause.org or khynes@commoncause.org).

Working CT 2009 (cont. from p. 1)

50% of workers since the beginning of the decade, gaps between high- and low wage workers are greater than at any time in the last three decades, and racial and ethnic wage gaps diminish economic opportunities for many.

Among the reports findings:

- Connecticut's current recession has been particularly severe. Unemployment in Connecticut is higher than at any time since 1977, and the number of jobs has fallen to the lowest point since 1998. The rate of job loss in the current recession has been 2.5 times faster than during the 2000-2003 recession.
- Unemployment is highest in Connecticut's largest cities. However, the greatest percentage increases in unemployment since 2008 have more often been in

smaller cities and towns.

- Unemployment has most heavily affected African Americans, Hispanics, and people without high school degrees.
- Low-wage workers have continued to lose ground over this decade, earning 7.5% less in 2008 than they did in 2001. Since 2001, wages have stagnated or declined for the bottom 50% of workers. However, wages for very high-wage workers (at the 90th percentile) reached their highest point in the decade in 2008
- Racial, ethnic, and educational wage gaps reveal limited economic opportunities for many Connecticut workers.
- Since the beginning of Connecticut's recession in March 2008, the state's greatest job losses have been in the professional and business services, construction, manufacturing, and retail trade sectors.

To help restore broader economic opportunities and to help families through the recession, the report recommends that the state:

1. re-think its economic development strategies,
2. ramp up supports for unemployed families,
3. avoid further state budget cuts that would result in further job losses,
4. and increase investments in education and worker training.

The State of Working Connecticut is released each year in partnership with the Economic Policy Institute, an economic think tank based in Washington, DC (www.epi.org). Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide, research and policy organization that works to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state's children, youth and families.

For more information on Connecticut Voices, or to read the Voices' report, see www.ctkidslink.org. Taken from the Connecticut Voices for Children website

Back to School (Cont. from p.1)

You should know:

- ▶ With the new expanded SNAP/Food Stamp eligibility guidelines families receiving reduced-price schools meals will be eligible for SNAP and should consider applying for SNAP.
- ▶ The USDA has translated forms into 25+ languages for families that may have trouble with the original form. Please contact EHC! for guidance in attaining these forms.
- ▶ All children receive the same meal and eat in the same place regardless of what they are paying for the meals. It is illegal for students getting free or reduced-price meals to be given a special meal ticket, be made to use different lines or rooms, or be discriminated against in any way.

*Taken from the 9/2009 EHC!
Newsletter*

10th Anniversary Collaborative Center for Justice

Justice - A Concern of Our HEARTS on Sunday, 10/04/09

Come and celebrate a Festival of the Arts, weaving together concern for social justice with the diverse gifts and cultural richness of our world using song, music, dance, storytelling, poetry, painting, sculpture, creative movement, creative writing, drama and prayer.

This celebration is free and open to the public! Please call to reserve a place: 860-692-3066 or email advocacy@ccfj.org by September 25, 2009.

Schedule for the day:

1:00p.m. Creative arts display viewing, program starts at 1:30p.m., followed by refreshments and art display at Saint Joseph College at 1678 Asylum Ave., W. Hartford, CT 06117.

Legislature Overrides Veto of Sustinet

On July 20, the Legislature convened in a "veto" session to reconsider bills that the Legislature had passed and the Governor had vetoed. Seven vetoes were overridden, including the Sustinet health care bill, which is now law.

The new law establishes a nine-member Board of Directors which must design and establish procedures to implement the Sustinet Plan. The plan is described as "a self-insured health care delivery plan that is designed to ensure that plan members receive high-quality health care coverage without unnecessary costs". The plan will be drafted as legislation and submitted to the General Assembly by January 1, 2011. Nancy Wyman, State Comptroller, and Kevin Lembo, State Healthcare Advocate, are the co-chairs of the Board of Directors.

State Budget Passed; Implementing Bills to Follow

Connecticut has a state budget - after a long budget fight between the Governor, who wanted to balance the budget with cuts and without tax increases, and the Democratic majorities in the Legislature, who proposed tax increases in order to minimize necessary cuts. On August 31, the Legislature passed a state budget, which the Governor allowed to become law without her signature.

The budget took effect on Wednesday, September 9. Some issues remain to be decided or clarified in implementer bills, but the outlines of the budget are now known. (Implementer bills are expected to be passed when the Legislature reconvenes on September 23 or 24.)

Although the Governor did not sign the budget, the document reflects compromises adopted by the Legislature in order to avoid a veto by

the Governor. Over the two years of the budget, the budget:

- increases taxes by about \$1 billion,
- spends the entire \$1.4 billion in the Rainy Day Fund
- raises \$1.3 billion by selling anticipated revenue streams
- raises many fees and makes transfers from off-budget funds and
- makes many cuts in spending and services, including about \$600 million in state employee wages and benefits.

Major Tax Changes

Personal Income Tax - rate increases from 5% - 6.5% on family income over \$1 million

Increase:

\$594 million in FY 10;

\$400 million in FY 11

Estate and Gift Tax - exempts estates and gifts under \$3.5 million from tax (up from \$2 million); reduces tax rates by 25%; corrects cliffs in previous tax

Decrease:

\$5.9 million in FY 10;

\$70.3 million in FY 11

Sales Tax - reduces rate to 5.5% on Jan. 2010 (*does not take effect if revenues don't meet expectations)

Decrease:

\$ 91.1 million in FY 10;

\$268.0 million in FY 11

Cigarette Tax - increases tax from \$2 to \$3 per pack

Increase:

\$99.3 million in FY 10;

\$117.6 million in FY 11

Corporation Tax Surcharge - 10% surcharge; small businesses exempted

Increase:

\$74 million in FY 10;

\$41.1 million in FY 11

Film Tax Credit - reforms to target CT-based operations

Increase:

\$10 million in FY 10;

\$15 million in FY 11

Significant Policy Actions

Health Care:

HUSKY and SAGA: The budget maintains funding for many programs which had been threatened. There will be no co-pays imposed in Medicaid; no premiums in HUSKY B; continued non-emergency dental coverage but with savings of \$8 million per year from undefined "prior authorization" requirements; no changes in services covered by SAGA.

Immigrants: health care coverage is continued for pregnant women and children who are recent legal immigrants and for recent legal immigrants in long-term care BUT coverage is eliminated for about 3,000 other recent legal immigrants.

Part D Wrap Around: most elements of the state-funded Part D Wrap-Around are eliminated. Dually eligible recipients will be required to pay some co-pays and funding to pay for non-formulary drugs is very limited.

Prescription Drugs: coverage for over-the-counter drugs is continued, subject to a preferred drug list and prior authorization; prior authorization is required for high cost drugs; mental health drugs are subject to a preferred drug list.

Medicaid Fee-for-Service: savings of about \$50 million in the first year and \$150 million in the second year are anticipated from implementing Special Needs Plans for dually eligible Medicaid/Medicare participants and other changes in the administration of the program.

Jobs First/Family Welfare:

Jobs First Employment Services:

is funded at about \$17 million. \$6.5 million that was added to this program several years ago in a separate budget line is eliminated. This is a significant cut but not the total elimination of the program or the level of cut that had been proposed.

See Policy Actions p.4

Housing Conference October 7th

Don't miss Connecticut's largest gathering of affordable housing practitioners and advocates. "A New Day for Housing", the annual conference of the Connecticut Housing Coalition, will be held on Wednesday, October 7th at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. This year's Keynote Speaker is HUD Deputy Secretary, Ron Sims. The major candidates for Governor have also been invited to offer their views on housing and community development issues.

In addition, this year's event promises 25 wide-ranging workshops, inspiring presenters, practical training and valuable networking opportunities. Register by September 18th for early-bird savings. For a conference brochure with registration form, go to

<http://www.ct-housing.org/Housing%20Conference%20Brochure%202009.pdf> or call 860-563-2943 x10. On-line registration form is also available at <http://www.ct-housing.org/conferenceregistration2009.htm>.

Policy Actions

(cont. from p.3)

TFA: Cost of living increase for TFA participants is eliminated.

Housing:

Funding for most key housing programs is maintained. Of particular significance: Last year, the Administration suspended funding for an additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing under the Next Steps Round III initiative. The budget provides \$1.8 million in FY 10 and \$2.3 million in FY 11, which should allow 50 to 100 units in shovel-ready projects to go forward.

Upcoming CABHN/FESN Meeting

September 18, 2009

9:30-11:30 A.M.

Location & Topics:
AARP, Corner of Oak &
Capitol Avenue

guest speaker:

Author Tim Black
'When a Heart Turns Rock
Solid'

New State Budget and its
impact on
programs & people

The Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN) is a statewide network of individuals, community groups and organizations which supports and promotes advocacy on low-income issues. For more information, please call (860) 278-5688.

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Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and
CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)
44 Capitol Ave., Suite 301
Hartford, CT 06106

CABHN FEVER *Extra*



Rock your Baby with The Diaper Bank!

Please join in on Thursday, October 22nd from 6:00-9:00 PM for this annual fundraiser which will be held at 45 Church Street, New Haven. Food, dancing, and silent auction are all on the agenda! Tickets are \$30 a piece or 2 for \$50. For tickets or more information, please call Janet Stolfi Alfano at 203-934-7009.

The Diaper Bank (TDB) centralizes the fundraising and distribution of free diapers to poor families through existing service providers, including local food pantries, soup kitchens, daycare centers, social service agencies and shelters. Through its extensive Diaper Distribution Network (DDN) of more than 50 agencies, TDB provides over 200,000 free diapers monthly to poor and low-income families in New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford.

Upcoming Events for Riverfront Children's Center

- **Saturday, September 19 at 9AM**, Volleyball Tournament will take place at Esker Point Beach in Groton, CT to benefit the Riverfront Children's Center. Contact Jennifer Sim at jsim@ssddc.com or call 860-460-7378 for registration and sponsor info.
- **Friday, October 23, 7-10PM** - Riverfront Children's Center is hosting a Silent Auction at the Mystic Arts Center to the benefit the Riverfront Tuition Assistance Fund for needy children. Admission includes desserts and Auction bidding is 7-9PM. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Call 860-445-2831.

Keep the Promise Advocacy Trainings

Keep The Promise has announced the 2009 schedule for their widely acclaimed Advocacy Legislative Training. Again this year, KTP is offering their basic Essentials training and their Leadership training.

Essentials of Legislative Advocacy - Thursday, October 1st and Thursday, October 8th, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm at the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT. Box Lunch provided. \$10 fee to help cover cost of book and lunch. Registration required.

Legislative Leadership - Thursday, December 3rd and Thursday, December 10th, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm at the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT. Lunch vouchers for the LOB Cafeteria will be provided. \$10 fee to help cover cost of book and lunch. Registration required.

Please call Cheri or Maura with any questions at (860) 882-0236 or 1-800-215-3021, or send an email to keepthepromise@namict.org.

"Out of the Darkness" Community Walk

The 4th Annual Out of the Darkness Community Walk will be held on Saturday, October 17 at Wickham Park, 1329 Middle Tpke West, Manchester, CT. Registration/check-in begins at 9:30 AM and walk starts at 10AM. This is a fundraising event to support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention www.afsp.org. Walk as a team or as an individual to help bring the stigma of mental illness and suicide Out of the Darkness. Register on-line at www.outofthedarkness.org Contact: Maureen Brown at mtbrdb@sbcglobal.net or call (860) 872-1863.

7th Annual Walk-A-Thon

GOODWorks, Inc. in partnership with Capital Empowerment, Inc. presents the 7th Annual Walk-A-Thon, Women Supporting Women in Transition, Sunday, October 3, 2009.

Registration Time: 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM
Registrations before September 17, 2009 include a T-shirt.

Registration Fee: \$20 or \$10 for inpatient treatment teams.

Walk begins at 9AM from East Hartford Riverfront and continues into Hartford and back for a total of 3.5 miles.

For information and sponsorship, call (860) 290-8329 or email gworks47@sbcglobal.net. Go to www.goodworksct.com.

Renter's Rebates Available

May through September is the time for older adults and people with disabilities to apply for a renter's rebate. The State program provides a reimbursement to renters who are over 65 or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Renter's rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons. For 2009 applicants, a single person's total 2008 income must be less than \$30,500; a married person's total 2008 income must be less than \$37,300 per couple. There is no asset restriction. For more information visit 2-1-1's eLibrary Paper on Renter's Rebates for Older Adults and Disabled.

*For article submissions,
please contact*

*Ellen Small
esmall@larcc.org or call
860-278-5688 x208.*

2009 Prospering Communities, Thriving
Families

*Building Foundations for a New
Prosperity*

Please Join Us!

October 19, 2009
Hartford Marriott Downtown

Plenary Speakers:

Dr. Ralph da Costa Nunez, The Institute for Children & Poverty
Dean Baker, Center for Economic and Policy Research

Workshop Tracks:

Asset Building
Community Leadership
Data Analysis and Usage
Public Policy
Workforce Development

Organizing Sponsors:

**CAFCA, CAHS, CTFSA, CT Voices, CWEALF,
End Hunger CT!, LARCC/CABHN, PCSW**

Visit www.cafca.org and click on Annual Conference for details
and to register!

2009 Prospering Communities, Thriving Families

Building Foundations for a New Prosperity
Monday, October 19, 2009
Hartford Marriott Downtown
200 Columbus Blvd
Hartford, CT

Plenary Speakers:

Dr. Ralph Da Costa Nunez, The Institute for Children & Poverty
Dean Baker, Center for Economic and Policy Research

Name _____

Email _____

Organization Name _____

Street Address _____

Conference Registration Fee and Instructions:

Conference Fee:..... \$99
(Includes Continental Breakfast and Lunch. Parking Voucher included if registration AND payment are received by October 5, 2009. NO EXECPTIONS)

Registration forms may be submitted electronically at www.cafca.org (preferred method), via fax at 860-832-9493 or via postal mail at the address below.

- **PLEASE submit one form per person to be registered**
- **Registration fees MUST be received by October 5, 2009 for parking voucher to be included.**
- **Please submit registration fees to CAFCA, 144 Clinton St., New Britain, CT 06053, Attention: Rhonda**

Visit www.cafca.org or email prosperingcommunities2009@cafca.org for more information