

National Community Action Foundation

For Immediate Release

November 13, 2007

Contact: Laura Johnston Monchuk

ncaf.news@ncaf.org, 202-741-9410

NCAF Blasts Bush's Veto of Labor-HHS

WASHINGTON (Nov. 13, 2007) – Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that administer self-help to low-income Americans nationwide are exasperated by President Bush's veto of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill.

“This is the height of hypocrisy,” said National Community Action Foundation Executive Director David Bradley. “The President's veto of Labor-HHS appropriations and passage of the Department of Defense appropriations in the same day is a clear-cut case of misplaced spending priorities. America will support investments in Iraq, but not invest in the education and well-being of U.S. children, low-wage workers and retirees.”

The bill would have increased Community Action's core resource, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and provided an increase for Head Start funding that many Community Action Agencies integrate with additional child and family development services. The bill also would have increased funding for senior programs that CAAs use for services such as senior centers and Meals on Wheels.

In addition, the Labor-HHS bill allocated 11.6 percent more for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, in which Community Action Agencies are reporting significant application increases. President Bush's 2008 budget request contained a 17.5 percent cut in LIHEAP below 2007 funding levels.

“Recent forecasts of energy prices that are 11 percent higher than last year and colder months ahead have many low-wage working families worrying about how much energy they will need to stay warm this winter,” Bradley said. “President Bush's veto is out of touch with the needs and expectations of the American people.”

“The Labor-HHS appropriations bill would have reversed cuts in human services programs enacted over the past several years and would have made key reinvestments in America's domestic priorities,” he said. “Voters expect our government to meet America's domestic needs in a fiscally responsible way, and they expect the parties to work together to meet those needs.”