

## **The Local Jobs for America Act Would Create Jobs for Women and Preserve Services for Women and Families**

### ***Women's Employment and the Recession***

The recession has had a broad and deep impact, with women as well as men suffering from job losses and sharply reduced family income.

- While men's unemployment rate has been, on average, higher than women's through the recession, women have experienced deep and significant job loss, with an unemployment rate of 8.2 percent in April 2010.<sup>1</sup>
- Women who maintain families, a group already at disproportionate risk of poverty, have an unemployment rate of 11 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- Unemployment rates for African-American women and Hispanic women are even higher, at 13.7 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Men's job loss has also increased the importance of women's contributions to family income, making it all the more imperative to preserve women's jobs. The number of married couples with children relying solely on women's wages increased by over a third from 2008 to 2009, to 7.4 percent.<sup>4</sup> Since the recession began, the percentage of married couples in which the husband is unemployed and the wife is working has more than doubled.<sup>5</sup> **Given the scope of women's job loss and the importance of women's earnings to families, recovery efforts must take women's jobs into account.**

### ***Shrinking Local Budgets Threaten Women's Jobs and Interests***

Falling tax revenues and cuts in aid from states have created massive budget gaps in local and municipal governments around the country, which has led to layoffs in local government workforces. **These cuts pose a particular harm to women and the families ever more dependent on women's income, because women hold more than 60 percent of jobs in local and municipal government.**<sup>6</sup> But a 2009 survey of city finance officers found more than two thirds of cities were instituting layoffs or hiring freezes,<sup>7</sup> and 155,000 fewer women work in local government today than in February 2009.

Community-based nonprofits like domestic violence shelters, food pantries, and health care clinics are shedding jobs as well, as they lose public funding and struggle to make up the difference with private donations during tight times. The non-profit workforce is also estimated to be majority female.

**As a result, librarians, teachers, caseworkers, and nurses are facing layoffs or seeing their hours and wages cut as local governments and nonprofits struggle to balance budgets.** For example—

- A recent survey of school administrators in 45 states found that 90 percent expected to be forced to cut positions in the 2010-2011 school year.<sup>8</sup> The Secretary of Education has estimated that 100,000 to 300,000 teachers may be laid off in 2010 in the absence of federal assistance.<sup>9</sup>
- Los Angeles has proposed laying off about 132 city child care employees and closing 26 licensed city-funded child care centers that offered child care at about a quarter of the cost of comparable private centers.<sup>10</sup>
- Philadelphia budget cuts forced Women Against Abuse, a local nonprofit that operates the only domestic violence shelter in the city, to layoff 19 out of 90 employees and turn away over 4,600 women seeking shelter in 2009.<sup>11</sup> When families are under financial strain, incidents of domestic violence increase, which means that there is a particular need for domestic violence services during recession.
- A recent survey found local health departments across the country shed 16,000 jobs in 2009 through layoffs and attrition.<sup>12</sup> A quarter of local health departments made cuts in maternal and child health services, and a quarter made cuts in prevention programs such as activities to improve childhood nutrition or reduce tobacco use.<sup>13</sup>
- Libraries nationwide are facing severe service cuts and layoffs. For example, Fairfax County, Virginia, recently proposed cutting 107 staffers and 89 full-time positions (including more than half of the 54 full-time librarian positions).<sup>14</sup>
- Not only are jobs being eliminated, local budget gaps are forcing cuts in crucial services delivered by local government and community organizations, including health care, child care, and education. These cuts in services typically fall especially heavily on low-income individuals and families, and thus especially heavily on women and women-headed households.

When state and local governments lay off workers and contract services, this has a ripple effect that harms private businesses as well, as less money is going into the economy, thus stunting a fragile recovery. Over half of the jobs and activity lost as the result of each dollar of budget cuts are likely to be in the private sector.<sup>15</sup>

### ***The Local Jobs for America Act***

**The Local Jobs for America Act, H.R. 4812, would provide direct federal assistance for local governments and local community organizations to preserve and**

**create jobs.** As a result, it would also help maintain necessary services and work to counteract the recessionary impact that local budget cuts would otherwise have on the economy. While the larger economy is beginning to create jobs again, federal assistance is particularly necessary now for local governments given that there is typically a significant time lag between broader economic conditions and local fiscal conditions, meaning that the worst is yet to come for local government budgets.<sup>16</sup>

Specifically, the Local Jobs for America Act would:

- Provide \$75 billion to save and create 750,000 jobs in local non-profits and local governments. These jobs would allow local governments and community organizations to continue providing necessary services in areas like education and health care. The positions would be fully federally funded for two years, with the hope that local governments' and nonprofits' budgets will have recovered sufficiently to fund these positions thereafter.
- Target funds at communities with high rates of unemployment and poverty, creating jobs where they are most needed.
- Use up to half of the \$75 billion to preserve local government jobs that would otherwise have been eliminated and up to 25 percent of these funds to create new jobs in local government. Funds are to be used to expand existing services or restore services cut in the last five years.
- Devote one quarter of the \$75 billion to job creation in local non-profit community organizations that are providing services not typically provided by the local government. This includes a broad range of programs like child care, home health care, and domestic violence assistance, to identify only a few.
- Save 250,000 education jobs, preventing lay-offs that would fall particularly heavily on women and that would harm students. (The Education Jobs Fund, S. 3206, would also provide this funding for education jobs.)
- Put 5,500 local law enforcement officers on the beat.
- Provide \$500 million to hire and retain fire fighters.
- Create 50,000 on-the-job training slots in private businesses targeted in high poverty areas, helping individuals gain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market.

These direct job creation efforts focused on local governments and community-based organizations will boost women's employment and help sustain the services that women and families depend on more than ever during tough economic times.

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- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Employment Situation: April 2010 (May 7, 2010), Table A-1, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.nr0.htm>.
- <sup>2</sup> *Id.* Table A-10.
- <sup>3</sup> *Id.*, Tables A-2 and A-3.
- <sup>4</sup> NWLC calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, America's Families and Living Arrangements Survey: 2009, Table FG2, available at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2009.html> (last visited April 16, 2010).
- <sup>5</sup> Heather Boushey, *Women Breadwinners, Men Unemployed* (July 20, 2009), available at [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/breadwin\\_women.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/breadwin_women.html) (last visited May 24, 2010).
- <sup>6</sup> NWLC calculations from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Database, at <http://www.bls.gov/ces/data.htm>.
- <sup>7</sup> National League of Cities, *Research Brief: City Fiscal Conditions in 2009* 6 (September 2009).
- <sup>8</sup> American Association of School Administrators, *A Cliff Hanger: How America's Public Schools Continue to Feel the Impact of the Economic Downturn* 13 (April 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> NWLC calculations from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Database, at <http://www.bls.gov/ces/data.htm>.
- <sup>10</sup> Gloria Angelina Castillo, *Layoffs Impacting Los Angeles City Child Care Centers*, EGPNews.com, March 18, 2010, at <http://egpnews.com/?p=16780>; Maeve Reston, *Cuts Coming to Child Care Centers Provided by City of L.A.*, L.A.Now, Feb. 23, 2010, at <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2010/02/los-angeles-child-care-services-face-cuts.html>.
- <sup>11</sup> Holly Otterbein, *4,671: That's How Many Victims Philly's Only Domestic Violence Shelter Turned Away Last Year*, Philadelphia City Paper, Mar. 17, 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> National Association of County and City Health Officials, *Local Health Department Job Losses and Program Cuts: Overview of Survey Findings from January/February 2009 Survey* (March 2010).
- <sup>13</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>14</sup> Derek Kravitz, *Library Services on the Line in Fairfax*, Washington Post, Feb. 19 2010.
- <sup>15</sup> Ethan Pollack, *EPI Briefing Paper, Dire States: State and Local Budget Relief Needed to Prevent Job Losses and Ensure a Robust Recovery* 2, 4-5 (November 19, 2009).
- <sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 9.